

**SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING 23 JANUARY 2013**

**REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON  
28 NOVEMBER 2012**

**External Audit – Grant Thornton**

- Met representatives from new External Auditor and received an overview of the firm and what the change would mean for this council
- Learned that the firm had 30 years' experience of auditing local authorities
- Welcomed the continuity in the audit team of former Audit Commission auditors familiar with this council

**Budget Monitoring Report – Q2: April – September 2012/13**

- Pleased to learn that rental income was above budget especially in the current economic climate
- Noted that planning fee income had increased and learned that some further major applications were expected to be received shortly
- Commended the good news in the report especially at a time when accurate budgeting was particularly difficult
- Learned that the council was examining a number of issues around homelessness with the aim of reducing the risk of residents getting to the homeless stage
- Noted that the amount of central government grant settlement and the implications of the localisation of council tax and changes to welfare reform were still unknown
- Reminded that the council always scored highly in the external audit on value for money arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

**Transparency Agenda**

- Received a report on the extent of the council's compliance with the government's Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency
- Embraced the benefits of transparency in decision making but foresaw that an obligation to publicise details of any expenditure in excess of £250 could lead to a significant increase in administration
- Agreed that consideration should be given to whether more detail should be included on the website about numbers of staff within directorates and their salary bands

**Forward Plan**

- Agreed to hold a special meeting on 4 March 2013 to ratify the recommendations of the Constitution Task Group relating to the current review of the Constitution for submission to Cabinet on 20 March 2013

I hereby commend the report to Council.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM O'HARE  
CHAIRMAN OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE