

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL**COUNCIL MEETING 25 MARCH 2015****REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2015***External Audit – Certification Report 2013/14*

- Received a positive report on the single claim [housing benefit] that the external auditors had been required to certify, providing assurance that the error level was very low and gave no cause for concerns about our arrangements
- Pleased that positive discussions were already taking place about next year's audit

Budget Monitoring Statement as at 31 December 2014

- Received a pleasing update on our overall financial position which included a net forecast underspend at the end of the year and showed we were on target in relation to savings
- Discussed and expressed some concerns about slippage on the capital programme but reassured that any slippage between financial years was only approved following discussion between the relevant director and portfolio holder
- Mindful that it was in the committee's remit to question the progress of individual projects, agreed to invite the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Street Scene to attend the next meeting to provide more detailed information about capital projects within that portfolio

Corporate Governance Progress Report

- Received an update on the progress made to strengthen the Council's governance arrangements
- Reassured that we would continue to investigate fraud and to publish data on our prosecutions following the creation of a Single Fraud and Investigations Service
- Requested that actions in the Corporate Governance Action Plan be made more SMART in future [specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound]

Employee Code of Conduct

- Received a report on a revised draft code designed to update and enhance the existing code
- Discussed in some detail the requirements for officers not to involve members in personal matters relating to any aspect of their employment
- Commended the revised draft as very readable and easily understandable and pleased to endorse it for consideration by the Standards Committee prior to Cabinet and Council

2nd Internal Audit Interim Report as at 28 November 2014

- Received a report on the progress made on the South Ribble and shared Financial Services Internal Audit Plans
- Reassured that the incoming Corporate Property Manager would lead on implementing an action plan drawn up following the review of the planned and reactive asset management maintenance programme
- Acknowledged that the report to this meeting was the first to include criticality ratings which put each audit into context and informed that only one area had been given a 'limited' assurance

Forward Plan

- Agreed that an item on the Actuarial Report on the Pension Fund would be taken to the 18 November meeting

I hereby commend the report to Council.

COUNCILLOR WARREN BENNETT
CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE