

**SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING 20 JANUARY 2016**

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2015

External Audit – The Annual Audit Letter for SRBC

- Welcomed the External Auditors issuing an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and an unqualified Value for Money conclusion based on their review of our arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in our use of resources
- Pleased to receive a fees rebate from the former Audit Commission and that there may be another rebate next year

External Audit – Governance Committee Update Report

- Questioned whether the substance of this and the above topic warranted external audit's attendance with its reporting to committee to be discussed further at a later date
- Re-assured that the committee would receive an update on the status of the three local government topics highlighted by the Auditor
- Thanked Fiona Blatcher (external audit engagement lead) wishing her well and looked forward to meeting her successor Mark Heap

Capital Programme – Parks & Open Spaces 2014/15

- Appreciated the revised report as a step forward suggesting there should always be an explanation when a scheme was put on hold – Cabinet member agreed this was the future intention
- Questioned how the re-scheduling of schemes might impact on resources for the following year's programme
- Confirmed that delayed schemes had no advance borrowing and no adverse financial impact
- Understood the reasoning for re-scheduling schemes such as those at Gregson Lane and Withy Grove Park

Contracts Procedure Rules & the 2015 Public Procurement Regulations

- Received a report highlighting changes by an EU Directive which had been transposed into UK law as the new 2015 Public Contracts Regulations
- Assured that whilst an apparent lengthy timescale between the change in legislation and this report, at a practical level, procedures/processes were in place to comply with the requirements and should the council have been audited earlier on this matter, it would not have been found deficient in its compliance
- Agreed to recommend that the changes to Contract Procedure Rules should be approved and adopted

Budget Monitoring Statement as at 30 September 2015

- Received an update on the council's overall financial position compared to the financial plan for the first six months of the current financial year (2015/16)
- Whilst acknowledging the health warnings, accepted the council was currently in a good financial position although the medium/long term challenges were very evident
- Questioned the current level of underspend in the council's Capital Programme
- Welcomed the additional £18,000 investment interest income partly due to the increased flexibility introduced following the Review of Counterparties 2015/16 and also receipt of £80,000 as interest owed by the Heritable Bank

Forward Plan

- Sought clarity on the council's Scrutiny Call-in procedures and a sub-committee to be convened
- Noted the Forward Plan without further debate

Changes To Statutory Dismissal Procedure For Protected Officers

- Received a report on proposed changes to the statutory dismissal procedure under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 which required councils to agree a new process for the dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer
- Sought more detail for what would be a very serious matter
- Challenged the need for a new Disciplinary Panel & debated potential membership
- Referred the matter for further consideration by its Constitution Task Group and a that a further report be presented to the next meeting of the committee

I hereby commend the report to Council.

COUNCILLOR ALAN OGILVIE
CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE