

Report of Governance Committee

I am pleased to present the general report of the Governance Committee summarizing the business which was considered on 25 January 2022.

Please note that the report may not reflect the wording used in the minutes, as they have yet to be formally agreed.

Audit Progress Report and Sector Update

1. The committee considered a report of the Council's External Auditor, Grant Thornton which sought to provide a general sector update and information for members on various reports of interest.
2. The External Auditor's explained that the housing benefit certification work was progressing, and an extension had been requested for approximately two weeks past the deadline of 31 January 2022. The External Auditors would shortly be issuing the annual audit, and the value for money opinion to Senior Management and Governance Committee.
3. We sought clarification as to why the housing benefit certification was delayed and we were advised that this was due to difficulties in accessing information remotely.

Internal Audit Interim Report as at 31 December 2021

4. We considered a report of the Director of Governance that gave an update on the work undertaken in respect of the Internal Audit Plan from September 2021 to December 2021. The report also sought amendments to the audit plan and asked members to consider the deferral of four reports.
5. We congratulated the Audit and Risk service on achieving re-certification for ISO9001.
6. We expressed concern at the limited assurance rating of the Buildings and Facilities Management audit and asked what action had been taken to rectify the issues. We were advised that the audit was issued in October and 19 actions agreed, of those actions 15 were implemented in full/ two actions had been given revised dates due to unforeseen circumstances and two actions were not yet due.

Strategic Risk Review

7. The committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive which provided an updated strategic risk register, including 16 strategic risks to the council, actions in progress.
8. Overall we were satisfied that risks are being managed and mitigated. We expressed concern about R10, low staff morale and satisfaction and we requested further information on the results of the staff survey. We were advised that officers were still in the process of analyzing the results which would then

follow due process and be provided to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet for consideration.

Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 – Action Plan Update

9. We considered a report from the Monitoring Officer that gave us an update on the progress of agreed actions within the Annual Governance Statement action plan.
10. We noted that good progress had been made with some actions completed in full. Officers anticipate that the full plan would be complete by the end of the year.
11. We were advised that significant work had been done in relation to recruitment, with a new e-learning platform launched and management development programme.

RIPA Update – 2021 - 2022

12. We noted that no RIPA investigations had occurred in the last twelve months.

I would like to recommend that Council note the report.

Councillor Ian Watkinson
Chair of the Governance Committee

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