

Report of the Governance Committee

1. Any recommendations on the reports that require a decision by full Council appear as separate items on the agenda.
2. Please note that the report may not necessarily reflect the wording used in the minutes.

Meeting held on 10 January 2022

Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting

3. An update was requested further to Minute 29 regarding the provisional Government Settlement. The Director of Finance, Louise Mattinson indicated that the one year provisional settlement was received in 19 December 2022 and officers were currently working through the details. She indicated that it included the provision for local authorities to increase council tax up to 3% (rather than 2% previously).
4. Arising from the Minute 28 a query was raised as to the current position in relation to the financial statements audit. Georgia Jones of Grant Thornton, the Council's External Auditors informed members that there had been a few issues creating a delay, including a change to CIPFA guidance just before Christmas which generated further work. It was anticipated that everything would be signed off by the end of next week. Grant Thornton would be issuing its final report but there were no substantial changes.
5. A progress update was requested in relation Minute 31 regarding the convening of a Constitution Working Group. The Director of Governance, Chris Moister informed the Committee that a scoping document should be produced by the end of this week and the first meeting would be scheduled in due course.

Homes England Compliance Audit – McKenzie Arms

6. The Director of Finance presented a report giving details of the need to acknowledge receipt of the Homes England Compliance Audit report as required by Homes England.
7. Arising from the report, whilst appreciating that the audit is confidential, members requested additional information regarding the questions on the audit and where possible further details in relation to the Council's "green" status confirming that it had met all the requirements.
8. The Committee agreed:
 1. To acknowledge receipt of the report as required by Homes England.

2. To note that there are no breaches recorded and the report is green meeting all requirements.

Annual Governance Statement: Actions - Update

9. The Director of Governance presented a report giving details of the need to update members on the Committee of progress on the implementation of the improvement actions in the Annual Governance Statement.
10. Arising from a query in relation to the expected completion of all the 9 categories, the Director of Governance indicated that the progress delays were stated in the report and it may not be possible to have all actions completed by the end of the financial year. He stressed that none of the improvement actions have an impact on the Annual Governance Statement.
11. The Committee noted the report.

Audit and Risk Interim Report as at 31st December 2022

12. The Head of Audit and Risk presented a report informing members of the work undertaken in respect of the Internal Audit Plan from September 2022 to December 2022 and to give an appraisal of the Internal Audit Service's performance to date. The report also provided information for members regarding wider work of the Audit and Risk Service.
13. The Head of Audit and Risk confirmed that the remaining report at draft stage was for the waste collection service and will be presented to the Committee in March 2023.
14. Several queries were raised and concerns expressed in relation to the Commercial Services Directorate Procurement Review, which gave details of a number of process failures. The Director of Governance explained that the failures by individuals to follow the processes already in place had been dealt with and a management action plan had been agreed to provide assurance that the issues identified in the report were not replicated elsewhere. The Director of Governance also agreed that he would discuss with the Chief Executive undertaking further investigations into the identified issues, but which are separate to the issues relating to the Governance Framework.
15. The Committee resolved:
 1. That the position with regard to the Internal Audit Plan and the work of the wider Service be noted;
 2. That with regard to the Commercial Services Directorate Review, the Chair be requested to write to the Chief Executive seeking assurance that he is

satisfied that all the risks were realised and that adequate steps have been taken;

3. That members of the Committee be provided with a copy of the above letter; and
4. That an update on the Management Action Plan be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Ian Watkinson
Chair of the Governance Committee