
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 OCTOBER 2023

Present: Councillors A Frampton (Chair), P Baillie, Chapman, Denness Evely, Finn and McCreanor

Apologies: Councillors McEwing, Rayment

10. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors McEwing and Rayment.

The Panel noted the temporary resignations of Councillors McEwing and Rayment from the Committee and the appointment of Councillors Evely and Finn as substitutes thereof in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

11. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED: that the minutes for the Committee meeting on 24th July 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record with one amendment to add that Councillor Frampton had replaced Councillor Letts on the Committee.

Matters Arising

That it be noted that the position update on the CIPFA Review of Financial Management detailing the action plan and identified savings for each Directorate due to be presented to this meeting was now to be presented to the November meeting as it was still in draft form and being updated.

12. **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Corporate Services detailing the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 which were presented for approval.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the changes made to the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 and Annual Governance Statement included within, since the version was presented to the Committee in April 2023 be noted.
- (ii) That the final version of the audited Statement of Accounts 2021/22 and Annual Governance Statement included within be approved and signed.

13. **EXTERNAL AUDIT - 2021/22 AUDIT RESULTS**

The Committee received and noted the report of the External Auditor detailing the 2021/22 Audit Results.

14. **MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT 2023/24**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Director of Governance, Legal and HR and Monitoring Officer detailing the Annual report on the Members' Code of Conduct.

15. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, DATA PROTECTION & REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACTS: ANNUAL REVIEW 2022-23**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Director of Governance, Legal and HR detailing the Annual Review of the Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Acts together with the statistical information for the year 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023 and the updated Corporate Surveillance document as detailed in the appendix to the report.

The Committee particularly referenced paragraph 38 of the report and the comment that the 'vast majority of requests' were responded to within timescales which was not what was reflected in the statistics that needed to be addressed going forward.

16. **ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2022 - 2023**

RESOLVED: that this item be deferred for consideration at the next meeting so it could be considered together with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman annual report.

17. **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Chief Internal Auditor detailing the progress to date across the 2023-24 Audit Plan.

The Committee particularly noted the Appointeeship Audit that had taken place and identified in the areas of concern for the Council. The committee was advised there was a task and finish group in place meeting monthly working monitoring an action plan and identifying operational improvements. The Committee requested that given the historical context of the audit and significant resource issues that the Executive Director of Resources and the Director of Customer Experience attend the December meeting to discuss this item in detail.

18. **INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE ON HOUSING VOIDS ACTION PLAN**

The Committee received a presentation from Internal Audit providing an update on the Housing Voids Action Plan as requested from the previous meeting. It was noted that improvements were unlikely to be seen until the end of Quarter 4 2023/24.

The Committee continued to express concern following the update and requested that a written report be presented to the next meeting providing an update on the action plan and specifically addressing the following points together with the attendance of the Director of Housing: -

- How many were on the list waiting to transfer?
- Sustainability of long-term stock condition and whether some were just not repairable versus expense to do so?
- Update on the time of voids, the Committee had been provided with March 2023 figures and noted that routine voids should be 29 days and were 94 and major works should be 106 and were 225.

- How would voids be kept down going forward and what would not be done to achieve this?

19. **QUARTERLY HR STATISTICS**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development detailing the Quarter 2 2023/24 HR statistics.

The Committee requested further information be provided to the next meeting providing comparative data for previous quarters, scale and size of Directorates, key themes and trends and an explanation of what was considered long term sickness given the authority had above average sickness levels with 55% being long term.