

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Wednesday, 2nd July, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Bill O'Donovan (Chairman)
Cllr Rhian Jones (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr P.J. Cullum
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr Jacqui Vosper

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Gaynor Austin, Cllr C.W. Card, Cllr Sue Carter and Cllr P.G. Taylor.

Cllr Thomas Day and Cllr S.J. Masterson attended the meeting as Standing Deputies.

Non-Voting Member

Mr. Tom Davies – Independent Member (Audit)

10. PROPOSAL TO START A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Committee considered the Monitoring Officer's Report No. LEG2510, which set out a proposal to start a Community Governance Review in response to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The review aimed to ensure that community governance arrangements would continue to be effective, convenient, and work in the interests of local residents in the event of the establishment of a unitary council for North Hampshire.

The report and the attached proposed terms of reference described the process and schedule for a Community Governance Review to be completed by January 2026, to ensure there was sufficient time to set precepts and transfer any assets and/or services to any new Parish Councils that the Council may choose to establish.

During discussion, Members raised questions regarding potential costs of setting up Town or Parish Councils, the services provided by Town and Parish Councils and the differences between the two.

The Committee noted that residents would need to have clarity about the consultation in order to seek their views, as there were several consultations ongoing with regards to LGR.

It was noted by the Committee, that the Council would consider a final report and draft Community Governance Reorganisation Order by January 2026 in advance of potential Parish Council elections in May 2026. An alternative option for the Council, was the decision to not make any changes to community governance, having given regard to the consultation results.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that the terms of reference for a Community Governance Review, as set out in the Monitoring Officer's Report No. LEG2510, be approved.

11. **CONSTITUTION AND COMMITTEE REVIEW UPDATE REPORT (2)**

The Committee considered the Corporate Manager – Democracy Report No. DEM2506, which set out proposed updates to the Constitution in respect of:

- (1) All proposed new amendments to the Constitution as described in the schedule in Appendix 1;
- (2) Updates to the Standing Orders for the Regulation of Business and Scheme for Public Questions as set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3;
- (3) Updates to the Terms of Reference for Committees; 'Role and Responsibilities of Council Decision-Making Committees', 'Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Terms of Reference' and 'Policy & Project Advisory Board – Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix 4 to come into effect from October 2025;
- (4) An update to the Code of Conduct for Councillors as set out in Para 2.1 of the Report; and
- (5) All previously agreed amendments and updates to the Constitution since the last review in February 2023 as set out in the schedule in Appendix 5.

During discussion, Members raised questions regarding the necessity of splitting the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee (CGAS), considering the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Committee noted that due to the CGAS Committee's numerous functions and responsibilities, reports from external bodies had strongly advised that focus was given to financial management and ensuring that Members felt they had the capacity to have the required specialism and in-depth knowledge. There was also the need for a strong pool of trained Members for licensing, with daytime availability, that had to be drawn from the CGAS Committee. Members could serve on both new Committees, if required.

Members also raised questions concerning the time allocated for questions at Council meetings. The Committee noted that the Mayor would have the ability to extend the time for public questions, if they considered it necessary.

- (i) The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that the proposed updates to the Council's Constitution, following consideration by the Constitution Working Group, as set out in the Corporate Manager -

Democracy Report No. DEM2506, be approved subject to the inclusion of the following additional amendments:

- that the terms of reference for the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee include reference to the Committee having responsibility for matters regarding the remuneration of the Head of Paid Service; and
- that the 'Scheme for Public Questions at Full Council' be updated at para 1.8 to state that the Managing Director, *in consultation with the Mayor*, may reject a question for Council for inclusion on the agenda.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

CLLR BILL O'DONOVAN (CHAIRMAN)

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