

**LICENSING AND GENERAL
PURPOSES COMMITTEE
21ST MARCH 2016**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE
HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC AND
CUSTOMER SERVICES
REPORT NO. DCS1602**

**AMALGAMATION OF THE LICENSING AND GENERAL PURPOSES AND
STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEES**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 For many years the Licensing and General Purposes Committee and Standards and Audit Committee have been working on a number of governance issues. During that time, changes have been made in the way that the Standards and Audit Committee is structured which has given the Council greater flexibility in the way that its functions are delivered. The purpose of this Report is to recommend that this Committee and the Standards and Audit Committee are amalgamated from the start of the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The current structure of committees dates back to 2001/02 as part of the introduction of the executive arrangements. At the time, the Standards Committee's structure was regulated with a majority of Co-opted Members appointed to it; indeed, for many years, one of the Co-opted Members was the Chairman. In 2012/13 new arrangements were introduced following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, which meant that the Committee was no longer required to have Co-opted Members and the representation from the Council was strengthened. However, the Council did decide at the time to retain two of the Co-opted Members in a non-voting capacity.
- 2.2 This structure still currently applies and the governance functions are split between the two committees. However, the Standards and Audit Committee has far more limited business than this Committee.

3. REVIEW

- 3.1 A review has recently been carried out of the structure which has been prompted by comments that have been made over the last couple of years by the Council's external auditors, Ernst & Young. Their view is that effective Member oversight of governance issues is not best facilitated by the split in governance responsibilities and have recommended that, in line with best practice, the oversight and consideration of governance issues, associated with internal control, risk management and financial reporting, is best assigned to one committee.

- 3.2 In these circumstances, and the current working arrangements, it is therefore proposed that the committees are amalgamated within the structure of the Licensing and General Purposes Committee. Whilst the Committee would not have co-opted members, the role of the independent person to advise on issues relating to standards is still in place.
- 3.3 If the Council agrees to the amalgamation of committees there will be a small saving in terms of administration and allowance costs of about £3,000. Consequential changes will need to be made to the Constitution to reflect the new arrangement, including a change to Standing Orders. It will also be necessary to suspend Standing Orders at the Annual Meeting of the Council to effect the change for 2016/17.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Over the years, the split in the responsibilities of the two committees has worked well, but the recent change in circumstances means that it would seem appropriate to amalgamate the committees. If the Council agrees the proposal at its meeting on 21st April, 2016 arrangements would be made for implementation to commence from the Annual Meeting of the Council.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Committee is requested to consider recommending the Council to amalgamate the Licensing and General Purposes Committee and the Standards and Audit Committee and to make the necessary changes to the Constitution.

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