

COUNCIL MEETING – 21ST APRIL, 2016

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 (2)

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

A report from the meeting of the Licensing and General Purposes Committee held on 21st March, 2016.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 For many years the Licensing and General Purposes Committee and the 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. Following a review of the arrangements, both the Standards and Audit Committee and my Committee have considered the amalgamation of the Committees and it is recommended that this takes effect 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 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, as it is now known, 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, it has been proposed that the committees are amalgamated within the existing 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 The new structure will require a change to Standing Orders through the deletion of references to the Standards and Audit Committee. It will also be necessary to make other consequential changes to the Constitution, particularly in relation to the responsibility for functions and the Standards Hearing Procedure Rules.
- 3.4 Having considered the comments of the Standards and Audit Committee, my Committee is comfortable with the proposal. Once the new structure is introduced, a review will be carried out of the working arrangements to include any future roles for external co-opted members.

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.

5. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 The Council is recommended to
- (i) amalgamate the Licensing and General Purposes Committee and the Standards and Audit Committee and authorise the Head of Democratic and Customer Services, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, to make the necessary changes to the Constitution; and
 - (ii) approve the amendment of Standing Order 4 (1) to remove reference to the Standards and Audit Committee, and the deletion of Standing Order 4 (5).

Note: The consequential changes to Standing Orders will stand adjourned to the Council Meeting on 24th May, 2016

A.M. FERRIER
CHAIRMAN
LICENSING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE