

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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

Voting Members

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

Cllr Abe Allen
Cllr A. Adeola
Cllr C.W. Card
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr M.D. Smith
Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr P.G. Taylor
Cllr Jacqui Vosper

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Gaynor Austin.

Non-Voting Member

Mr. Tom Davies (ex officio)

36. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

AGREED: The appointment of Cllr Bill O'Donovan as Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year in place of Cllr A. H. Crawford.

37. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

AGREED: The appointment of Cllr Rhian Jones as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year in place of Cllr Bill O'Donovan.

38. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

39. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MANAGING DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The Committee received the Leader of the Council's Report No. PEO2503, which set out the process undertaken for the recruitment of the Council's Interim Managing Director and Head of Paid Service, as approved by Council on 5th February 2025. In accordance with the Constitution, the recommendation for the appointment of the

preferred candidate was made by the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee.

Report No. PEO2503, followed the report approved by the Council on the 5th February 2025 and put in place arrangements for the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer functions for 6 months.

During discussion, the Committee were advised that, as the Chief Executive was leaving the Council on the 6th May 2025 for reasons of redundancy, there would be a handover period between the Chief Executive and the Interim Managing Director, with the statutory role of Head of Paid Service being transferred to the Interim Managing Director on the 11th April 2025. The Committee noted that the role of Interim Managing Director and Head of Paid Service was for a period of 6 months because of the upcoming reorganisation of the Council.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL:**

- (i) the appointment of Ian Harrison as the Council's Interim Managing Director and Head of Paid Service with effect from the 11th April 2025 for an initial period of 6 months; and
- (ii) that the post of Corporate Manager – Legal Services be designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer from the 11th April 2025 for an initial period of 6 months.

40. **ACCOUNTING POLICIES FOR THE YEAR**

The Committee considered the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2510, which reviewed the proposed accounting policies to be applied for the closure of the 2024/25 accounts. These were prepared in line with Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK.

The report stated the changes to the accounting policies and informed Members of additional/amended disclosures and the level of internal materiality to be applied in the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2024/25.

The Committee noted that an approved set of accounting policies enabled the Finance team to complete the Annual Statement of Accounts with considered rules and assumptions, and provided clarity to the readers of the Accounts as to how they had been prepared.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) the Accounting Policies, including the amendment disclosed at Appendix 1 for closure of the 2024/25 account, be adopted; and
- (ii) the updated disclosures and internal level of materiality be included within the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25, be noted.

41. **INTERNAL AUDIT - AUDIT UPDATE ON 2024/25**

The Committee received the Audit Manager's Report No. AUD25/02, which provided an overview of the work finalised for the 2023/24 Audit Plan, a progress update on the 2024/25 Audit Plan, and a schedule of work to be delivered in Q4.

During discussion, Members raised questions regarding the number of audits undertaken each year and virements, which were described as the movement of money between services.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) the completed audit work be noted; and
- (ii) the progress to date towards the 2024/25 Audit Plan be noted.

42. **INTERNAL AUDIT - CHARTER AND AUDIT PLAN 2025/26**

The Committee received the Head of Partnership's Report No. AUD25/02, which set out the Internal Audit Charter and Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26.

The Committee heard from Neil Pitman, from Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP), who reported that the Internal Audit Charter and Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 were required by the Global Internal Audit Standards in UK Public Sector. The Internal Audit Charter was a formal document that included the internal audit function's mandate, organisational position, reporting relationships, scope of work, types of service, and other specifications. The Internal Audit Plan was a document, developed by the Chief Internal Auditor, that identified the engagements and other internal audit services anticipated to be provided during a given period.

The Internal Audit Charter was reported to the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee annually for review and approval and it had been updated to reflect the requirements of the new Standards. The proposed risk based Internal Audit Plan had been developed at a strategic level providing a value adding, and proportionate level of assurance aligned to the Council's strategic outcomes. It was based on a range of inputs including review of the Council's strategic risk register, sector knowledge and discussions with management teams.

During discussion, Members raised questions regarding SIAP's role in Internal Audit, engagement with Unitary Councils and potential areas of focus for future audits.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) the Internal Audit Charter 2025/26 be approved; and
- (ii) the Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 be approved.

43. **SELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR 2025/26**

The Committee considered the Chief Executive's Report No. DEM2502 which set out the current position on the selection process for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

The Council had established a process and criteria for selecting the Mayor and Deputy Mayor which was adopted as part of the Council's Constitution. In accordance with the procedure, the Chief Executive wrote to all Councillors in December 2024 to invite expressions of interest in the role of Deputy Mayor for 2025/26, progressing to the position of Mayor in 2026/27.

The Committee was advised by the Corporate Manager – Democracy that the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Calum Stewart, had confirmed his wish to proceed through the normal progression to the position of Mayor for 2025/26.

It was reported that for the position of Deputy Mayor, it had not yet been possible to secure a nomination for recommendation to the Committee that met all of the requirements of the selection criteria. It was proposed to convene a meeting of Group Leaders to review the process to elicit a candidate for the role of the Deputy Mayor and agree the basis of determining a candidate that would secure broad based support.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that:

- (i) Cllr Calum Stewart be appointed as Mayor-Elect for the 2025/26 Municipal Year; and
- (ii) the process for seeking a nomination for Deputy Mayor 2025/26 was underway with a view to securing a nomination before the Annual Council Meeting, be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.19 pm.

CLLR BILL O'DONOVAN (CHAIRMAN)
