

MINUTES of a meeting of the **GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**
held in the **NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH**
STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on **TUESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 2020** at **6.30PM**

Present: Cllrs Northeast (Chair),
B Blanchard-Cooper, Chace,
Long, Price and Dr Walsh
KStJ

2019/2020

11. **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**
The evacuation procedures were noted.
12. **FILMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS, USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND MOBILE PHONES**
The procedures were noted.
13. **APOLOGIES**
There were apologies from Councillor Seex, with Councillor Chace attending as substitute.
14. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**
Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or personal and/or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the Agenda. The standing declarations were noted, and no further declarations were made.
15. **MINUTES**
The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2019 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.
16. **PUBLIC FORUM**
There were no members of the public present.
17. **CHAIR'S REPORT AND URGENT ITEMS**
There was none.
18. **OFFICER'S REPORT**
- 18.1 **Internal Audit Report 2019/20**
The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which set out the outcome of the first Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2019/20 and Action Plan. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) explained that there were only minor recommendations which were set out in the report. These related to the recording of high value payments

in Committee minutes, annual approval of standing orders and direct debits, insurance policy renewal and testing computer data back ups. The RFO explained the emergency procedures and action in the event that the Manor House and or the Town Councils computer system was unavailable. It was noted that the Town Councils Business Continuity Plan was being reviewed following Council agreeing the Priorities for 2019/2023. Members welcomed the positive report from the internal auditor and thanked the RFO and her team for their hard work. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

The interim Internal Audit report for the year ending 31st March 2020 and the action to implement the Internal Auditor's recommendations be noted.

18.2 Standing Orders Review

The Assistant Town Clerk explained that having recently undertaken a review of them with the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, no changes were proposed. Members were satisfied that no significant changes were required to the document and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

The outcome of the review be noted and no further action be taken.

18.3 Financial Regulations Review

It was noted that the Town Councils financial regulations were being reviewed in light of recent changes published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). The outcome of this review would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee or Full Council if required. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The update be noted.

18.4 Annual Governance Review

The Assistant Town Clerk explained that having recently undertaken a review of the Councils Governance arrangements with the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, no changes were proposed. Members were satisfied that the Town Council's Code of Conduct and Register of Members Interests were robust and up to date and it was **RESOLVED** that:

No further action be taken in respect of the Town Council's existing Governance arrangements in respect of the Members Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests.

18.5 Annual Review of Internal Controls

The Committee considered a report which set out details of the Town Council's Internal Controls (previously circulated). It was noted that the Internal Auditor assessed the effectiveness of the Town Council's Internal Controls as part of his inspection. The Committee was satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement was robust and had been complied with. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. The Councils Internal Control System be approved.**
- 2. Council be RECOMMENDED to approve Statements 2, 5, 6 and 7 of the Annual Governance Statement and that they have been complied with.**

18.6 Annual Review of Corporate Risk Register

18.6.1 The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) that outlined the changes to the updated Corporate Risk Register relating to the Town Councils' Strategic Priorities. The RFO explained that the documents had been reviewed by the Service Managers and that minor changes were proposed to bring the document in line with current practice. This included changes to the Code of Conduct section to align with the new Councillor ID Policy and Guidance and the introduction of online banking.

18.6.2 Members proceeded to review the Registers in more detail and identified three areas that required further clarification. Regarding areas of work where the Council relied on contractors, it was considered that the controls should reference all necessary documentation relating to the service provided. It was also noted that the control in relation to the maintenance of Council owned Vehicles should include insurance. Regarding the Council Priorities and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), it was noted that clarity on the process for passing these payments to local councils was awaited from the Local Planning Authority. Once known, this section of the Register would be updated for review. A minor amendment to the Identified Risk was agreed to clarify it was for the Town Council to identify opportunities to maximise CIL income. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. The Council's Corporate Risk Management Strategy and Procedures be approved and RECOMMENDED to Full Council for approval.**
- 2. Subject to strengthening the wording as set out in Minute 18.6.2 above, the Risk Registers be RECOMMENDED to Full Council for approval.**

18.7 Annual Complaints and Compliments Review 2019

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which set out complaints and compliments for 2019. It was **RESOLVED** that:

**The complaints and compliments review
2019 be noted.**

18.8 Council's Policies Aims and Objectives

Following the Council's decision regarding Priorities for 2019/2023 the Policies, Aims and Objectives document had been reviewed and a revised document (previously circulated) was considered by the Committee. It was noted that the revised document will be presented to Policy and Finance Committee who will be asked to make a recommendation to Full Council in March 2020. A risk assessment of the approved version will be undertaken and brought to this Committee for review in July 2020. It was **RESOLVED** that:

**The revised document and the procedure
be noted.**

19. EXEMPT BUSINESS

There was none.

The meeting closed at 7:07pm

CHAIR