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## Minutes of a meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 6.30pm

### Present:

Councillor Northeast (Chair)  
Councillor Blanchard-Cooper\*  
Councillor Long  
Councillor Price  
Councillor Seex

### 2020/2021

This meeting is available to view using the following link:

<https://youtu.be/CETVcGSWFhQ>

#### 1. Virtual Meeting Protocol and Use of Mobile Devices

The Chairman opened the meeting and explained how it would be conducted and the protocol that would be followed, including how any break in the proceedings due to technical difficulties would be managed.

#### 2. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillor Molloy, and it was noted that Councillor Blanchard-Cooper had been delayed and would join the meeting as soon as he was able.

#### 3. Declarations 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.

#### 4. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and it was noted that arrangements would be made for these to be signed at a later date.

## 5. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

There were none.

## 6. Public Forum

In accordance with the Remote Meetings Protocol introduced by the Town Council, members of the public who wished to address the Council or any of its Committees during a remote meeting should have emailed their representations one clear working day before the meeting. There were none.

\*Councillor Blanchard-Cooper joined the meeting at 6:33pm.

## 7. Officer's Reports

### 7.1. Internal Audit Report 2019/20

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which set out the final Internal Audit Report for Littlehampton Town Council for the financial year 2019/20. The Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) explained the process and activities planned to address the points in the action plan. Regarding the IT back-up, it was noted that sufficient procedures were in place at most sites and that a physical check of the systems at The Southfields Jubilee Centre was outstanding. This was currently delayed due to the Coronavirus restrictions and would be undertaken when circumstances allowed. The quarterly publication of details of the Council's expenditure over £500 on the website had been delayed due to other priorities related to COVID-19 but had now been updated in accordance with the Transparency Regulations. It was also noted that the introduction of electronic banking was close to being implemented. Members thanked the Finance Team for their hard work, and it was **Resolved** that:

**The Internal Audit report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and the actions taken and proposed be noted.**

### 7.2. Code of Conduct for Members

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which contained proposals to update the "Model" Code of Conduct Code of Conduct by the Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC). This followed the publication of the Committee on Standards in Public Life review and recommendations which the Government had yet to consider. The Assistant Town Clerk outlined the role of the Principle Authority in these matters and it was noted that an Interim Monitoring Officer had been appointed. Observing that the annual review of this Council's arrangements found them to be robust, Members did not consider any change was required and that the update from SALC be

noted. The use of social media as a means of communication for Councillors was however becoming increasingly important and one where Members considered that further training could be beneficial. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

**The update be noted.**

### **7.3. Review of Financial Regulations**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which set out proposed amendments to the Town Council's Financial Regulations and Procurement Policy. This followed the publication of a revised "model" issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). The Deputy Town Clerk and RFO explained that the revised Regulations utilised the new model to create a more coherent document, incorporate procedures to support the introduction of online banking and some minor changes to the text to bring it into line with current practice. She also provided further clarification regarding the use of Authorised Signatories and Authorised Member Signatories and explained how they were interpreted in the Regulations. Members were pleased to see the progression towards online banking. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

**The proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations and Procurement Policy be recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee and finally to Full Council for approval.**

### **7.4. Review of Delegations**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which set out the outcome of a review of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Committees. The review had concluded that the Scheme of Delegation to Committees was up to date. The Scheme of Delegation to Officers had however been amended to reflect changes in the staff structure. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

- 1. Full Council be RECOMMENDED to note the outcome of the review of the Scheme of Delegation to Committees.**
- 2. The revised Scheme of Delegation to Officers be endorsed and be RECOMMENDED to Full Council for approval.**

### **7.5. Complaints Policy Review**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which set out the outcome of a review of the Council's Complaints Policy. Minor changes were proposed to bring it into line with the staff structure, update some of the terminology and changes to the Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). It was noted that the details of compliments and complaints were brought to this Committee every February and it was **Resolved** that:

**The updated Complaints Policy be endorsed.**

### **7.6. Draft Committee Workplan**

The Committee considered workplan (previously circulated) which had been updated with the timetable for the review of the Town Council's governance arrangements. It was **Resolved** that:

**The Committee Workplan be approved.**

## **8. Exempt Business**

There was none.

The meeting closed at 7:09pm.

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**CHAIR**