



How to contact us

Write to: Manor House, Church Street,
Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5EW

Email: ltc@littlehampton-tc.gov.uk

Call: 01903 732063

Find us online: www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the New Millennium Chamber, Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton on Tuesday 2nd July 2019 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor Northeast (Chair)
Councillor B Blanchard-Cooper
Councillor Long
Councillor Price
Councillor Seex

2019/2020

1. Chairman's Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Acknowledging the number of newly appointed Councillors on the Committee he explained that the workload of the Committee would require them to absorb a significant amount of material. He therefore urged them to use the time between meetings to read and raise questions with Officers. It was also agreed that further training on the matters delegated to this Committee be arranged.

2. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

3. Filming of Council Meetings, Use of Social Media and Mobile Phones

The procedures were noted.

4. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ.

5. 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.

6. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2019 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

7. Public Forum

There was one member of the public present.

- 7.1. Mr Chester addressed the Committee regarding what he considered were gaps in the governance framework in relation to the work of councillors, particularly relating to guidance for councillors on how to engage safely and appropriately with constituents. He asked at what point the Council considered it should be raised if a member had been challenged or reprimanded regarding their past conduct.
- 7.2. The Chair thanked Mr Chester for raising this important matter. It was noted that the standards by which councillors carried out their role were set out in the Code of Conduct which was monitored by the District Council. It was also noted that following a recent parliamentary inquiry, a number of recommendations to improve the current regime had been presented to the Government for consideration. This was being monitored by the National Association of Local Councils who would be coordinating future engagement with local councils in this respect. Members considered that further training on the Code of Conduct and safeguarding was essential to support them in carrying out their role as Councillors. They also thought it appropriate that Councillors be issued with some form of identification in respect of their role and confirmed their willingness to undergo DBS checks if required. This was noted and it was agreed that options in terms of additional training and ID be investigated further.

8. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

There was none.

9. Officer's Reports

9.1. Internal Audit Report 2018 to 2019

- 9.1.1. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) presented a report (previously circulated) which set out details of the final Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2018/19. The RFO explained the local authority audit regime, the internal audit programme and the areas that it covered. It was noted that work outside the scope of the current internal audit programme could be requested but would incur additional costs.
- 9.1.2. The Internal Audit had been compiled following interim visits by the Internal Auditor which took place in November 2018 and June 2019. There were no issues arising warranting formal comment and the Internal Auditor had made

two recommendations regarding Transparency and Risk Management. These related to improvements to the disclosure of expenditure information regarding the Town Council's contracts and updating the Risk Register with contingency arrangements to ensure the accurate and timely processing of the Councils' payroll. It was noted that the latter was the subject of a separate report. Regarding the former it was noted that the RFO was developing a section on the Town Council's website to provide procurement information on 'tenders for contracts' and 'contracts, commissioned activity and agreements' with a value that exceeds £5,000. The Chair commended the RFO on the pleasing outcome of the Internal Audit and it was **Resolved** that:

- (1) The proposed enhancement to the publication of expenditure in respect of contracts on the Town Council's website as set out in point 3.3.2 of the report be noted.**
- (2) The contents of the Internal Audit report for the year ending 31st March 2019 be otherwise noted.**

9.2. Annual Review of the Corporate Risk Register

- 9.2.1. The Committee considered a report which set out the outcome of the review by the RFO of the section of the Register that dealt with the Employment of Staff (previously circulated). The RFO explained that she was the only officer with the knowledge to process the Council's payroll. The Internal Auditor had therefore recommended that contingency arrangements be considered, and a risk report added to the Register. The Register already identified the "Loss of key staff" as a risk and set out the measures in place to mitigate the risk. These had been updated and referenced the documentation of the payroll procedures, access to the Town Council's electronic payment system and contingency arrangements to contract personnel to cover key functions. Acknowledging the sensitive nature of the data used to process the payroll it was agreed that the word "only" be added to the text at the end of the section relating to the accessibility of data accessed by appropriate staff.
- 9.2.2. It was noted that where staff needed to have knowledge of key policies, they were required to sign declarations confirming that they had read and understood the relevant policies and procedures. The Town Council's policies were reviewed and managed in accordance with an overarching Policy which would be circulated to the Committee. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

The wording of the Risk Report relating to the Employment of Staff, as set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report, be updated as set out in

**Minute 9.2.1 above, endorsed and
RECOMMENDED to Full Council for approval.**

9.3. Draft Committee Work Plan

The Committee had before it a draft Work Plan setting out a timetable and proposals for key areas of work (previously circulated). The Assistant Town Clerk explained that the frequency of reviews was determined by a mixture of statutory requirements, best practice and the Council's Committee cycle. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

The Work Plan be approved.

10. Exempt Business

There was none.

The meeting closed at 7:04pm.

CHAIR