

# Public Document Pack



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09 May 2014

Dear Councillor

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the **ANNUAL MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** on Wednesday 14 May 2014 at 6.00 pm, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

11 **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE** (Pages 3 - 14)

To consider the joint report of the Chairman of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer.

12 **ANNUAL REPORT ON SCRUTINY** (Pages 15 - 28)

To consider the report of the Monitoring Officer.

13 **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** (Pages 29 - 44)

To consider the joint report of the Chairman of the Governance Committee and the Director of Governance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicky", written over a horizontal line.

Chief Executive

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Meeting and Date:</b>	<b>Annual Council – 14 May 2014</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>David Randall, Director of Governance</b>
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Non-Key</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>

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<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	To update Members on the work of the Standards Committee during 2013/14
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<b>Recommendation:</b>	That Members note the report
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1. **Summary**

This report summarises the achievements of the Standards Committee against its Terms of Reference for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

2. **Introduction and Background**

2.1 The purpose of the Council's Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst the 45 Members of Dover District Council and the (up to) 317 Members of the town and parish councils in the District, including monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct and arrangements for dealing with associated complaints, and monitoring the Council's handling of service complaints and Ombudsman investigations.

3. **Annual Report**

3.1 The Annual Council meeting makes provision for the receipt of the Annual Report of the Standards Committee, detailing its work during the preceding year.

4. **Identification of Options**

4.1 To note the report.

4.2 To not note the report.

5. **Evaluation of Options**

5.1 The annual report on the activity of the Standards Committee is for note.

6. **Resource Implications**

6.1 None from this report.

7. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Annual Report of the Standards Committee – 2013/14

8. **Background Papers**

## 8.1 Democratic Services' files

Contact Officer: Kate Batty-Smith - Democratic Support Officer



# **Annual Report 2013/14**

## **Report of the Standards Committee**

# Contents

1. **Foreword**

Introduction on behalf of the Standards Committee by the Chairman

2. **Comment by the Monitoring Officer**

The view of the Monitoring Officer

3. **The Role of the Standards Committee**

An explanation of the role of the Standards Committee

4. **Local Assessment of Complaints**

Assessment of complaints received in 2013/14

## **Foreword by the Chairman**

This has been the first full year of operation of the new Standards regime, and I am pleased to report that the system is working well.

As part of the continual review of the new arrangements, and the Code of Conduct in particular, full Council adopted some changes to the Code in January 2014, most significantly a provision which allows Members to declare non-financial interests. In my view this is a welcome revision which will promote greater transparency.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Monitoring Officer and his Deputy for all their hard work during the past year. I would also like to thank Bernard Dowley, the Independent Person, and Andrew Hayes, his substitute, who, as always, have fulfilled their roles with enthusiasm and professionalism.

I am pleased to commend this Annual Report of the Standards Committee to the Council.

**Councillor Bernard Butcher**  
Chairman of the Standards Committee

## **Comment by the Monitoring Officer**

This report summarises the achievements of the Standards Committee of Dover District against its Terms of Reference for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

The Code of Conduct adopted by full Council in June 2012 has been kept under review by the Kent Secretaries working group and, as presaged in last year's report, a new provision was adopted by Council in January 2014 in order to allow Members to declare a non-pecuniary interest. This was introduced partly in response to feedback from some Members who felt that the new Code should make provision for them to declare non-financial interests in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life, thereby offering greater transparency and maintaining public confidence in this Authority. Further minor changes relating to the definitions of 'Associated Person' and 'Member' were adopted at the same time. Subsequent guidance for councillors issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government on openness and transparency in relation to declaring personal interests indicates that this Council was right to include such a provision.

The new arrangements continue to operate effectively, and I am very grateful to Harvey Rudd, the Deputy Monitoring Officer; the Democratic Services team; Bernard Dowley, the Independent Person and Andrew Hayes, the Deputy Independent Person, for all their support during the past year.

**Mr David Randall**

Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer



# The Role of the Standards Committee

## **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

2.1 The primary responsibility of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst the 45 members of Dover District Council and (up to) 317 members of Town and Parish Councils in the District.

2.2 The main functions of the Standards Committee are as follows:

- To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by District Councillors, Town and Parish Councillors and Co-Opted Members.
- To advise the District Council on the adoption of or revisions to its Code of Conduct.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct and to review and manage the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints.
- To maintain oversight of the District Council's arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints.
- To monitor complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations and to make payments or provide other benefits in cases of maladministration.
- To advise, train or arrange to train District Members, Co-opted Members and Town and Parish Councillors on matters relating to the Code of Conduct.
- To act as an advisory body in respect of any ethical governance matter and to advise on local ethical governance protocols and procedures.
- To appoint a sub-committee to deal with Code of Conduct complaints, following investigation.
- To grant dispensations to Members pursuant to S33(2) of the Localism Act 2011 and paragraph 8 of the adopted Code of Conduct in appropriate circumstances.
- To deal with any alleged breaches by Members of local protocols adopted by the Council including the Protocol for Good Practice in Planning Procedure and the Protocol for Officers and Members for Dealing with Conflicts of Interest of Councillors in Professional Practice.

## **CODES AND PROTOCOLS**

2.3 In addition to the above, the work of the Standards Committee also impinges upon the following codes and protocols of Dover District Council:

- Members' Kent Model Code of Conduct
- Members' Protocol for Good Practice in Planning Procedures
- Protocol for Relationships between Members and Officers of a Local Authority

- Protocol for Officers and Members for Dealing with Conflicts of Interest of Councillors in Professional Practice

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

2.4 The Standards Committee is a group appointed by the Council to help maintain and promote high ethical standards in both the District Council and Town and Parish Councils in the District. Since July 2012, the Committee has comprised seven District Councillors (the independent and parish members having been removed as a result of the Localism Act 2011).

2.5 The membership of the Standards Committee for 2013/14 was as follows:

Councillor B W Butcher	Councillor L A Keen
Councillor P J Hawkins	Councillor S C Manion
Councillor K Mills	Councillor C J Smith
Councillor P Russell	

*The Standards Committee can only draw substitute District Councillors from the pool of named substitutes appointed by Council.*

### **OFFICERS WHO SUPPORT THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

2.6 The Standards Committee receives support from the Monitoring Officer (Director of Governance), the Solicitor to the Council (who is also the Deputy Monitoring Officer) and the Complaints/Corporate Resilience Officer. In addition, Democratic Services Officers support the Standards Committee and the activities of the Monitoring Officer as necessary.

2.7 The Monitoring Officer is a statutory appointment whose responsibility is to ensure the lawfulness and fairness of Council decision-making. The Monitoring Officer serves as the guardian of the Council's Constitution and ethical standards. As part of this the Monitoring Officer works closely with the Standards Committee to assist it in the role of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst Members of the District Council and Town and Parish Councils in the District.

### **STANDARDS ARRANGEMENTS**

2.8 The Localism Act 2011 received Royal Assent in November 2011 and replaced the Standards arrangements then operating in England and Wales with effect from 1 July 2012.

2.9 Having worked closely with other authorities in Kent, this Council adopted the Kent Model Code of Conduct on 26 June 2012 which prescribes the conduct that is expected of Members and co-opted Members of the authority when acting in that capacity. Provisions relating to registration and disclosure of pecuniary interests are included in the Code, with failure to register a pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or becoming aware of the interest becoming a criminal offence. The new Code is also consistent with Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life, i.e. selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. Under the new regulations, the Monitoring Officer is required to establish and maintain a register of interests of Members and co-opted Members of the local authority and parishes in the authority's area.

- 2.10 Following the abolition of Standards for England on 31 March 2012, this authority assumed responsibility for dealing with and investigating all complaints relating to breaches of the code, including those made against parish councillors in this district. Specific responsibility for assessing alleged breaches of the Code rests with the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person (appointed by Council on 25 June 2012). The Monitoring Officer is able to consider whether the complaint can be resolved informally at any stage. However, if the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person, considers that the complaint merits investigation, he will appoint an investigation officer to undertake the investigation. Once the investigation has concluded, the Monitoring Officer may consider that informal resolution is appropriate. Alternatively, he may convene a meeting of the Hearing Panel (comprising members of the Standards Committee) to determine the outcome of the complaint. The range of sanctions that can be applied is limited, and the Hearing Panel has no powers to suspend or disqualify or to withdraw the allowances of the member who is the subject of the complaint.
- 2.11 When adopting the new Code of Conduct, the Council requested that the Code and associated arrangements be kept under review. A working group of the Association of Kent Secretaries was established for this purpose and recommended revisions to the Code to Council in January 2014. These included the amendment of the definitions of 'Associated Person' and 'Member'. More significantly, the group also recommended that Members should be able to declare interests which are not financial or regulatory in nature in accordance with Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life. This latter recommendation was made partly because, during the first year of operation of the new arrangements, a significant number of Members had, on several occasions, felt the need to make disclosures at meetings in the interests of transparency, even though these did not fall into the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Significant Interest classifications. Council duly adopted these changes and the Code now makes provision for Members to make a Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests.

## **2013/14 ACTIVITIES**

### **(a) Corporate Complaints**

- 2.12 The Standards Committee has a responsibility to oversee the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedures. The period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 has seen 138 corporate complaints received by the Council compared to 142 complaints received during the same period the previous year.
- 2.13 There were 21 complaints considered by the Local Government Ombudsman during the 2012/13 municipal year compared to 29 complaints received in 2011/12. Data relating to the municipal year 2013/14 will be available from the Local Government Ombudsman in due course.

### **(b) Training**

- 2.14 No training sessions were held during 2013/14, but training on the Code of Conduct will be provided for the new intake of Members following the local elections in 2015.
- 2.15 In September 2013 the Department of Communities and Local Government issued guidance for Members on openness and transparency in relation to personal interests which was circulated to all Members of the Council and to the town and parish councils.

(c) **Dispensations**

- 2.16 Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 gives powers to the Monitoring Officer to grant dispensation to Members with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest to participate in discussions and to vote. During the municipal year 2012/13 there were 44 requests for dispensation relating to the setting of Council Tax and the approval of the Council Budget and Members' Allowances which will apply until May 2015. There was one request for dispensation during the municipal year 2013/14 relating to the setting of Council Tax and the approval of the Council Budget and Members' Allowances.

(d) **Consultation**

- 2.17 The Standards Committee considered no consultations during the municipal year 2013/14.

**2014/15 ACTIVITIES**

(a) **Objectives**

- 2.18 The key objective for the Standards Committee in 2014/15 will be to continue to review the operation of the Kent Model Code of Conduct and suggest areas for enhancement and further training.

## **Local Assessment of Complaints**

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 represented a sea-change in the way that complaints are assessed by the Council, replacing the two sub-committees (Initial Assessment and Review) with a decision by the Monitoring Officer, taken in consultation with the Independent Person during a consideration meeting which is held in private.
- 3.2 The following information contains no details of the names of elected or co-opted members about whom complaints have been made, and is intended for use as a summary of activities only.

### **Complaints against Elected or Co-opted Members**

- 3.3 The municipal year 2013/14 represents the first full year of operation of the new Kent Model Code of Conduct and saw the Monitoring Officer receive 18 complaints. For comparison, the Monitoring Officer received 33 complaints during 2012/13.
- 3.4 The 18 complaints received in 2013/14 relate to members at 4 authorities.

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY</b>
<b>Meeting and Date:</b>	<b>Annual Council – 14 MAY 2014</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>David Randall, Director of Governance</b>
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Non-Key</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>

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<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	Under the Council's Constitution an Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny is required to be presented to the Annual Meeting of the Council.
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<b>Recommendation:</b>	That Members note the report.
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**1. Summary**

This report summarises the achievements of the Council's two Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

**2. Introduction and Background**

3. Article 6 of the Constitution requires that an annual report be presented to Council on the workings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, their future work programmes and any proposed amendments to working methods. Accordingly, the attached report provides the following information:

- (a) Statement by the Monitoring Officer.
- (b) Performance Review Statistics.
- (c) Future Work Programmes.
- (d) Amendments to Current Practices.

**4. Identification of Options**

- 4.1 To note the report.
- 4.2 To not note the report.

**5. Evaluation of Options**

5.1 The annual report on the activity of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees is for note. A sound governance arrangement, including an effective scrutiny process, underpins the achievement of all the Council's corporate objectives.

**6. Resource Implications**

6.1 None from this report

**7. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2013/14

8. **Background Papers**

8.1 Agenda items of the Governance Committee – 2013/14

Contact Officer: Rebecca Brough, Team Leader – Democratic Support





# Annual Report 2013/14

## Overview and Scrutiny

## Contents

1. **Monitoring Officer Statement**
2. **Roles and Responsibilities**
3. **Performance Review**
4. **Work Programme**

## Monitoring Officer Statement

- 1.1 Article 6 of the Constitution requires that an annual report be presented to Council on the workings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, their future work programmes and any proposed amendments to working methods. Accordingly, this report provides the following information:
- (a) Statement by the Monitoring Officer.
  - (b) Performance Review Statistics.
  - (c) Future Work Programmes.
  - (d) Amendments to Current Practices.
- 1.2 As the Monitoring Officer, I am satisfied that the statutory overview and scrutiny function is operating effectively and has been properly and lawfully exercised in accordance with the Constitution. In particular, the following parts of the overview and scrutiny function have been effectively delivered:
- (i) The Council has operated two Scrutiny Committees (the law requires one or more).
  - (ii) Work Programmes have been set and approved and carried out and reported to the Council.
  - (iii) More than 12 ordinary meetings in total of Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been held during the year.
  - (iv) Policy review and development has been undertaken in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
  - (v) Reports from Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the executive have been considered by the executive within 4 weeks.
  - (vi) Overview and Scrutiny Committees have exercised call-in.
  - (vii) The urgency procedures have been properly exercised and reported.
  - (viii) Officers and Members have attended Scrutiny Committees to give evidence when required.
- 1.3 The scrutiny function has operated in accordance with guidelines/protocols to assist in respect of:
- (a) The call-in procedure;
  - (b) Chairmen's procedure for key question setting and chairmen's meetings;
  - (c) The key stages for topic reviews;
  - (d) Public submission of topics for review;
  - (e) Petitions
  - (f) Public speaking at committee; and
  - (g) Officer support.
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Sub-Committee was established to act in a co-ordination role for work programmes and scrutiny reviews and is called as necessary.

**David Randall**

Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

## The Role and Responsibilities of Scrutiny

- 2.1 The overview and scrutiny function is central to the constitution of the Council. It should act to promote accountability and transparency within the decision-making process.
- 2.2 The key agreed local principles forming the foundation of the overview and scrutiny function at Dover District Council are as follows:
- The focus for scrutiny must be based upon the achievement of outcomes rather than upon process and procedures in order to develop a function that can make a real difference to the Council and the district.
  - That Overview and Scrutiny be positive, objective and constructive, seeking to add value to any service that it considers. Scrutiny should acknowledge good practice where found and recommend improvements where necessary.
  - It is essential that the Council has an active and challenging scrutiny function that reflects corporate priorities regarding the provision of services.
- 2.3 The Council has two Overview and Scrutiny Committees – the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee and the Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee. The Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee is predominantly customer focused, providing overview on the exercise and delivery of council services and functions. In contrast, the Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee is community focused, considering the impact of service delivery across the whole of the public and private sector on the local community.
- 2.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees are responsible for discharging the functions, some of which are conferred by legislation, in relation to the following matters:

### **Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee**

- (a) Budget and Major Policy
- (b) Call-in
- (c) Performance Monitoring and Improvement
- (d) Scrutiny Co-ordination (including the allocation of all overview and scrutiny functions not within the specific remit of the Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee)
- (e) Petitions referred to the scrutiny committees

### **Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee**

- (a) Community Reviews and Accountability
- (b) Public Health
- (c) Major Projects
- (d) Crime and Disorder

### **Policy Development and Review**

- 2.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees exercise the following functions in respect of policy development and review:
- (a) Assist the Council and the executive in the development of its Budget and Policy Framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
  - (b) Conduct research and undertake community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
  - (c) Consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
  - (d) Question members of the Executive and/or Committees and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area; and
  - (e) Liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that collaborative working enhances the interests of local people.

### **Overview and Scrutiny**

- 2.6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will within their terms of reference:
- (a) Review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Executive and/or Committees and Council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
  - (b) Review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
  - (c) Consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
  - (d) Reconsider decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive (following the exercise of the right of call-in).
  - (e) Question members of the Executive and/or Committees and Chief Officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
  - (f) Make recommendations to the Executive and/or appropriate Committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
  - (g) Review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance; and
  - (h) Question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent). Overview and Scrutiny Committee have powers conferred by legislation in

respect of requiring certain bodies such as the Executive or Community Safety Partnership members to attend for the purpose of providing evidence in respect of their functions.

## Performance Review

- 3.1 If overview and scrutiny is to be successful it needs to achieve tangible outcomes. These can be achieved through influencing executive decision-making – whether through scheduled scrutiny through the work programme or call-in, influencing partners and outside bodies or raising awareness of issues with members of the council and the wider public.

### Structure

- 3.2 Dover District Council maintains a multiple scrutiny committee model. The number of scrutiny committees maintained by the Council is in line with the national district council average of two scrutiny committees.

### Scrutiny Recommendations

- 3.3 During the year a number of recommendations have been made by Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet and Council, and a summary of the outcomes is shown below:

Overview	Executive Business	Council Business	Total
Number of Scrutiny Recommendations	41	8	49

Executive Business	Approved	Amended	Rejected	Total
Number of Scrutiny Recommendations	32	8	1	41

Council Business	Approved	Amended	Rejected	Total
Number of Scrutiny Recommendations	8	0	0	8

- 3.4 The average approval level of recommendations from Scrutiny (both committees) by Cabinet was 78% (against a target of 80%) and by Council was 100% (against a target of 80%).

### Frequency of Meetings

- 3.5 There have been a total of 12 meetings of the Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee (plus 2 key question setting meetings) and 12 meetings of the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee (plus 1 key question setting meeting) held during the municipal year. There have been no simultaneous co-located meeting of both scrutiny committees during the year.

### Call-In

- 3.6 There has been 1 Executive Decisions called-in for scrutiny during the course of the municipal year, relating to Land at St Martin's Road, Deal which was called-in by Councillor K Mills.
- 3.7 It should be emphasised that the number of times the call-in power is exercised has no direction correlation with the efficiency of the Council's overview and scrutiny functions. For example, the use of programmed scrutiny in the decision-making process can ensure that Overview and Scrutiny Committees have less need to call-in

an item having already had the opportunity to express a view on a matter to the decision-maker.

**Public Speaking at Overview and Scrutiny**

- 3.8 The Council adopted a protocol for public speaking during the municipal year 2008/09. The conclusion drawn from the exercise of the public speaking protocol to date is that when combined with the power for members to request that items be added to the agendas of Overview and Scrutiny Committees it does provide a method by which members of the public can directly express their views to decision-makers. During the last municipal year no members of the public have registered to speak relating to an issue before the Committee.

**Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)**

- 3.9 There have been no Councillor Calls for Action in the preceding municipal year. In keeping with Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance that the process be used as a method of last resort. In accordance with constitutional changes made following the introduction of the CCfA, any member of the Council can nominate an item within the remit of a scrutiny committee for the agenda, although the committee does not have to include any suggestions in its work programme.

**Public Petitions**

- 3.10 The Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee has received 3 petitions during the preceding municipal year. A further petition concerning the Dover Town Investment Zone (DTIZ) was referred to Council by virtue of the number of signatures and at the request of the petition organiser.
- 3.11 As it has been four years since the current petition scheme was introduced and following changes to the statutory guidance underpinning the current scheme by the Coalition Government, a review of the petition scheme will be undertaken during the municipal year 2014/15.
- 3.12 The Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee usually acts as the committee to receive petitions referred to Members by the Head of Democratic Services. The petitions received by the Committee during the last year were as follows (all petition text as per the petition document):

<b>Petition Title</b>	Sale of Brookfield Place Car Park
<b>Petition</b>	“Dover District Council has advertised the sale of the Car Park at Brookfield Place, along with the adjacent toilet. It is proposed that the Council and their agents cease the planned sale of the car park and retain the area for use by local residents and businesses and the medical centre.”
<b>Signatures</b>	103 (mix of e-petition and paper)
<b>Petition Dates</b>	18 December 2012 – 18 April 2013
<b>Committee Date</b>	28 May 2013
<b>Action Taken</b>	The Committee made recommendations to Cabinet that the site be retained for community use and not sold. The car park site was withdrawn from sale prior to the recommendations from the Committee and Cabinet agreed to designate it for residents parking subject to there being no legal impediment to doing so.

<b>Petition title</b>	Parking in the Vicinity of River School
<b>Petition</b>	"The residents of River Parish, and other concerned



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	<p>individuals, seek urgent support from Dover District Council in their attempts to avoid injury or fatality near and around River School, during the busy arrival and departure time slots for the children. We urge Dover District Council to allocate parking attendants to work regularly in the school's vicinity, at appropriate times, in order to issue penalty notices to offending drivers."</p>
<b>Signatures</b>	558 (paper petition)
<b>Petition Dates</b>	Petition received 1 October 2013
<b>Committee Date</b>	15 October 2013
<b>Action Taken</b>	Recommendations to Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder for Access and Property Management in respect of (a) the regular use of parking attendants in the vicinity of the school and the linking of this for River and other schools as part of the enforcement programme and (b) liaising with the Head Teacher at River School to suggest the introduction of a school run safe crossing programme.

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<b>Petition Title</b>	No to a badger cull on council land
<b>Petition</b>	"We the undersigned petition the council to call on Dover District and surrounding areas owned by the council to prohibit the culling of badgers on council-owned land and invest in vaccination programmes locally. We ask this because we believe culling to be inhumane, inefficient and unscientific."
<b>Signatures</b>	69 (e-petition)
<b>Petition Dates</b>	27 November 2013 – 03 March 2014
<b>Committee Date</b>	11 March 2014
<b>Action Taken</b>	Acknowledging the comments of the Director of Environment and Corporate Assets that the Council had no intentions to conduct a cull and that it wasn't legally permissible anyway, the Committee requested a report on additional information to be made to a future meeting.

### **Budget Scrutiny**

- 3.13 The Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee conducted its scrutiny of the budget at its February 2014 meeting. The Committee received a detailed briefing from the Director of Finance, Housing and Community prior to setting its key questions.

## Work Programme

- 4.1 Each Committee has developed a one-year work programme and scrutinised a number of issues.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Major Items within Work Programme</b>
Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee	(*) Denotes work initiated by the Committee from its work programme
Items considered during the course of the year include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Allocations Policy for Social Rented Housing</li> <li>• Tenancy Policy</li> <li>• Shaping the Future of Children's Centres in Kent (with KCC Cabinet Member)*</li> <li>• Health Scrutiny – South Kent Coast CCG and East Kent Hospitals Trust on the subject of Buckland Hospital and future local health services*</li> <li>• Scrutiny Report on Hydraulic Fracturing (more commonly known as 'Fracking') for Council</li> <li>• East Kent Housing – Tenant Groups Update</li> <li>• Regeneration Update*</li> <li>• Crime and Disorder Update*</li> <li>• Tenancy Agreements</li> <li>• Scrutiny Report on Live Animal Exports (On-going – resuming in June 2014 following the European elections)</li> <li>• Youth Service Arrangements (With KCC Cabinet Member)*</li> <li>• Scrutiny of DDC's Council Newsletter (May 2014)*</li> </ul>	

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Major Items within Work Programme</b>
Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee	All Budget and Policy Framework Items and Selected Key Decisions within the Forward Plan
<p>(*) Denotes work initiated by the Committee from its work programme</p> <p>Items considered during the year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council budget and medium term financial plan</li> <li>• Land at St Martin's Road, Deal (Call-In)</li> <li>• Petition – Brookfield Place, Car Park</li> <li>• Performance Report – Quarter 4, 2012-13</li> <li>• Performance Report Target 2013/14</li> <li>• Appointment of LDF Representative</li> <li>• Dover District Heritage Strategy</li> <li>• Installation of LED Energy Efficient Lighting at the Whitfield Offices</li> <li>• Big Screen</li> <li>• Performance Report – Quarter 1, 2013-14</li> <li>• Parks and Open Spaces Strategy</li> </ul>	

Committee	Major Items within Work Programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petition – Parking in the vicinity of River School</li> <li>• Release of Funds from the Medium Term Capital Programme for Plant Replacement and Legionella Prevention work at the Leisure Centres</li> <li>• Performance Report – Quarter 2, 2013-14</li> <li>• Biggin Hall and Public Toilets, Maison Dieu, Dover</li> <li>• Modern Apprenticeships Report*</li> <li>• SIMALTO Consultation Feedback</li> <li>• Budget Scrutiny Options Report*</li> <li>• Enforcement Policies*</li> <li>• ICT Update (Business Plan and PC Refresh)*</li> <li>• Review of On and Off Street Parking Charges</li> <li>• Dover District Local Development Scheme</li> <li>• Members ICT (iPads)</li> <li>• Fees and Charges</li> <li>• Performance Report – Quarter 3, 2013-14</li> <li>• Planning Appeals – Award of Costs</li> <li>• Procurement of a Payroll Service and System</li> <li>• Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Pre-Submission Consultation Draft</li> <li>• Review of On and Off Street Parking Charge Period</li> <li>• Dover District Local Development Scheme</li> <li>• Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan</li> <li>• To seek approval for the implementation of an updated Dover District Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2013-2026</li> </ul>

5.4 There are additional areas in the work programme of a scrutiny committee that have yet to be actioned:

- Scrutiny of the Dover Town Investment Zone (23 June 2014)
- Community Infrastructure Levy (at key milestones)
- Local Development Framework (at key milestones)

5.5 There have been several external organisations or community groups involved in scrutiny (either as an interviewee or by providing documentary evidence) during the municipal year 2013/14.

5.6 Any items not completed during the 2013/14 work programmes will be rolled as priorities for the 2014/15 work programme.

5.7 The Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee continued to maintain an overview role in respect of contracts and tenders during the municipal year to ensure that costs were being controlled in a difficult economic and budgetary climate.

5.8 The work programmes are subject to regular review by the individual Scrutiny Committees and possible revision in liaison with the Scrutiny Co-ordination Sub-Committee having regard to the corporate objectives and priorities, public consultation, and other events that may require the Scrutiny Committees to reappraise their work programmes.

5.9 Cabinet references relating to items on the agenda are extracted from the Record of Decision and included in the agenda as a standing item along with the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions. This is to ensure that when considering a report, the

Overview and Scrutiny Committees have access to all relevant information pertaining to the decision.

**New Legislation**

- 5.10 Any new legislation affecting overview and scrutiny will be considered and implemented as required.

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Meeting and Date:</b>	<b>Annual Council – 14 May 2014</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>David Randall, Director of Governance</b>
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Non-Key</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>

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<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	The Annual Report of the Governance Committee to be presented to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 14 May 2014
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<b>Recommendation:</b>	That Members note the report.
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**1. Summary**

This report summarises the achievements of the Governance Committee against its Terms of Reference for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and details the impact that it has made on the overall system of internal control in operation for that period.

**2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 The purpose of the Council's Governance Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, provide an independent review of the Authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.

**3. Annual Report**

3.1 The Annual Council meeting makes provision for the receipt of the Annual Report of the Governance Committee, detailing its work during the preceding year.

**4. Identification of Options**

4.1 To note the report.

4.2 To not note the report.

**5. Evaluation of Options**

5.1 The annual report on the activity of the Governance Committee is for note.

**6. Resource Implications**

6.1 None from this report

**7. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Annual Report of the Governance Committee – 2013/14

8. **Background Papers**

8.1 Agenda items of the Governance Committee – 2013/14

Contact Officer: Jemma Duffield - Democratic Support Officer



# **Annual Report 2013/14**

## **Governance Committee**

# Contents

1. **Foreword**

Introduction by the Chairman on behalf of the Governance Committee.

Comment by the Director of Governance.

2. **Summary of the Role of the Governance Committee**

3. **Work undertaken by the Committee during 2013/14**

4. **Work Programme for 2014/15**

5. **Programme of meeting dates 2014/15**

6. **Leaflet – The Governance Committee**

A copy of a leaflet, for use by both members and non-members of the Committee giving guidance on the functions, role and activities of the Governance Committee.



## **Foreword by Chairman of the Committee**

This report summarises the work of the Committee during the preceding year and concludes that once again it received clear, concise and relevant information together with timely reports and actions taken in response to Members' requests.

The Governance Committee continued to be assured of the integrity and reliability of data held in financial statements and the work undertaken by Internal and External Audit provided detailed assurance on those areas of the Council's work which were the subject of reports.

The assurances from the Director of Finance, Housing and Community, Director of Governance and Director of Environment and Corporate Assets and the work of Internal and External Audit together support the Committee in forming their opinion of the financial statements, enabling them to agree to sign them off in accordance with the regulations

The submission of this Annual Report continues to enhance the effective communication between the Committee and all sections of the Council including the Executive, Statutory Officers, the Head of Internal Audit, External Audit and other stakeholders.

**Councillor Trevor Bartlett**  
Chairman of the Governance Committee

## **Comment by Director of Governance**

This report summarises the achievements of the Governance Committee against its Terms of Reference for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and details the impact that it has made on the overall system of internal control in operation for that period. In particular the Committee has effectively provided an independent assurance on the risk and control framework of this Council.

**David Randall**  
Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

## The Role of the Governance Committee

The role of the Governance Committee is set out clearly in the Council's Constitution and is also presented in greater detail in the attached leaflet 'Membership of the Governance Committee: Guidance for Members and information for non-Members'. The six appointed members of the Council provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment together with independent review of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment. The Committee also oversees the financial reporting process by considering the final Statement of Accounts.

### Work Undertaken During 2013/2014

1. The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 require the Council to, at least annually, review the effectiveness of its System of Internal Control, and then publish a statement on internal control within the Annual Governance Assurance Statement. The Council's Corporate Management Team accepted the 2012/13 Annual Governance Assurance Statement and authorised the Chief Executive to sign it following consultation with the Council's S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. On 2 July 2013 the Leader of the Council approved the 2012/13 Annual Governance Assurance Statement. The Statement included shared services such as East Kent Housing and EK Services in the Governance Framework.
2. During the year the Governance Committee received updates on progress against the agreed actions from the annual governance assurance process. The Committee was able to request service managers and, where necessary, the relevant portfolio holder to attend the committee to give an update on progress against agreed actions to reduce risk and/or improve governance.
3. The Committee considered the effectiveness of Internal Audit by reviewing the annual assessment of the Director of Finance, Housing and Community and Director of Governance (S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer), the view of External Audit; and the quality of reports, actions and follow up through the quarterly reports submitted throughout the year to Committee. The quarterly Internal Audit reports have included the following Council services or topics:

Audit Area	Assurance Level
Port Health	Substantial
Environmental Protection Service Requests	Substantial
EK Services – Housing Benefit Payments	Substantial
EK Services – Housing Benefit Admin. & Assessment	Reasonable
Housing Allocations	Reasonable
Officer Code of Conduct and Counter Fraud Arrangements	Reasonable
Licensing	Reasonable
Payroll	Reasonable
Recruitment and Induction	Reasonable
EK Services – ICT Software Licensing	Limited

<b>Audit Area</b>	<b>Assurance Level</b>
Absence Management (Sickness, Annual and Flexi Leave)	Limited
EK Services – Housing Benefit Quarterly Testing (Qtr 4 of 2012-13)	Not Applicable
Disabled Facilities Grants	Substantial
Business Continuity and Emergency Planning	Substantial
CCTV	Substantial
Dover Museum and Visitor Information Arrangements	Substantial
EK Services - Network Security	Substantial
Members' Code of Conduct & Standards Arrangements	Substantial
EK Services – Housing Benefit Quarterly Testing (Qtr 1 of 2013-14)	Not Applicable
Local Code of Corporate Governance	Substantial
EK Services – Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Substantial
Right to Buy Applications	Reasonable
EK Services – Housing Benefit Quarterly Testing (Qtr 2 of 2013-14)	Not Applicable
Treasury Management	Substantial
Capital	Substantial
Budgetary Control	Substantial
Coast Protection	Substantial
Service Contract Monitoring	Substantial
Environmental Health – Food Safety	Substantial
Insurance & Inventories of Portable Assets	Substantial/ Reasonable
Freedom of Information and Record Management	Reasonable
East Kent Housing – Repairs and Maintenance	Reasonable
Environmental Protection – Contaminated land, pollution, air and water quality.	Reasonable
Cemeteries	Reasonable/ Limited
EK Services – ICT Software Procurement	Limited
EK Services – Housing Benefit Quarterly Testing (Qtr 3 of 2013-14)	Not Applicable

4. The Committee received the Final Accounts with an unqualified audit opinion at its meeting in September 2013, presented by the Audit Commission.

### **Work Programme for 2014/15**

<b>2014/15 Governance Committee</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Main Agenda Items</b>
June 2014	Internal Audit Annual Report Internal Audit Quarterly Progress Report Annual Governance Assurance Statement Grant Thornton's Quarterly update

<b>2014/15 Governance Committee</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Main Agenda Items</b>
September 2014	Final Annual Accounts 2013/14 Internal Audit Quarterly Progress Report Grant Thornton's Quarterly update
December 2014	Internal Audit Quarterly Progress Report Annual Governance Assurance Statement Action Plan – progress report Grant Thornton's Quarterly update Risk Management and Value for Money Update
March 2015	Internal Audit Annual Plan 2015/16 Internal Audit Quarterly Progress Report Grant Thornton's Quarterly update Governance Committee Programme for 2015/16

### **Programme of Meeting Dates 2014/15**

(to be confirmed at Annual Council on 14 May 2014)

26 June 2014  
25 September 2014 (Final Accounts)  
4 December 2014  
26 March 2015



Membership of the  
Governance Committee:  
Guidance for Members  
and information for non-Members

March 2012

## **Governance Committee – Mission Statement**

Why is it important to have a Governance/Audit Committee?

Corporate Governance is all about doing the right thing in the right way.

The Governance Committee is the Council's Audit Committee monitoring to ensure Dover District Council delivers effective decision making, value for money in all expenditure and conducts itself in an open, ethical and transparent manner which displays the highest levels of integrity.

## **Introduction**

The aim of this Guidance is to tell those who are not members of Dover District Council's Governance Committee about the importance of its work not only to the Council as a whole but also to the communities of Dover District who benefit from good governance in their local authority.

It will also inform any potential or existing elected Member of the District Council as to what will be expected of them should they be appointed to serve on the Governance Committee.

Finally it serves as a reminder to those Councillors who already fulfil the role of member of the Governance Committee, helping them to explain their function, assess their own performance and benchmark with others in similar positions.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the Governance Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework and its associated control environment; independent examination of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment; and to oversee the financial reporting process.

The Governance Committee is an essential element of good governance and is best delivered by a Committee which is independent of the Executive (Cabinet) and Scrutiny functions. An effective Governance Committee can help to raise the profile and importance of internal control, risk management and financial reporting arrangements within the Council. It can also act as a forum for discussing issues raised by internal (East Kent Audit Partnership) and external (Audit Commission) audit.

The Audit Commission challenges local authorities to ensure that their Audit or Governance Committees work effectively. In particular a sound system of internal control is in place which includes effectively delivering the core functions of an Audit Committee that provides challenge to the Executive when required; and provides for effective leadership on governance, financial reporting and audit issues.

## **Core Functions**

The main issues with which the Governance Committee can deal are:

- Consider the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated counter fraud and corruption arrangements;
- Seek assurances that action is being taken on risk-related issues identified by auditors and inspectors;

- Be satisfied that the Council's assurance statements, including the Governance Statement properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it;
- Approve (but not direct) internal audit's strategies and plans;
- Review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising and seek assurances that action has been taken where necessary;
- Receive the annual report of the head of internal audit;
- Consider the reports of external audit and inspection agencies;
- Ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted;
- Review the financial statements, external auditor's opinion and reports to Members and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.

### **Features**

Good Governance Committees are characterised by strong chairmanship – displaying a depth of skills and interest. An interest and level of knowledge in financial and risk management, accounting concepts and standards and the regulatory regime are also essential. There needs to be unbiased attitudes – treating auditors, Cabinet and Corporate Management Team (CMT) equally, as well as having the ability to challenge the Cabinet/CMT where required. The membership of the Governance Committee should be balanced, objective, independent of mind and knowledgeable.

Other features of an effective Committee include:

- meetings characterised by free and open discussion by all members without political influence being displayed;
- prompt decisions on all matters put before the Committee;
- financial understanding displayed by one or more of the Members when considering issues;
- monitoring and, where necessary, supporting managers to secure successful outcomes to audit recommendations.

### **Structure and Administration**

Although no single Committee model is prescribed it should be independent of the Executive and Scrutiny functions. It should have clear reporting lines and rights of access to other committees and functions.

There must be terms of reference which are reviewed on an annual basis taking into account relevant governance developments and how the Governance Committee integrates with other committees of the Council.

Regular attendees to Governance Committee meetings should include the Chief Executive, Director of Governance & Monitoring Officer, Director of Finance, Housing and Community (with S151 responsibility), Head of Internal Audit and the Audit Commission. The Committee should also have the right to call on any other officers or agencies of the Council as required.

### **The Benefits**

The Governance Committee will bring the following benefits to the Council:

- reduce the risks of illegal or improper acts;
- reinforce the importance and independence of internal and external Audit;
- increase confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial reporting.

Stricter internal control and the establishment of a Governance Committee can never eliminate the risks of serious fraud, misconduct or misrepresentation of the financial position. However it will:

- give additional assurance through a process of independent and objective review; and
- raise awareness of the need for internal control and the implementation of audit recommendations.

### **Committee authority**

The Governance Committee is vested with sufficient authority to act with independence. It is constituted as a committee of the Council and the terms of Reference are contained within the Council's Constitution. The Committee has explicit authority to receive full access to information and the ability to investigate any matters within its Terms of Reference.

### **Frequency of meetings**

The frequency of meetings needs to be driven by the nature and timing of the business to be considered, any complementary work conducted by other committees and any work that can be carried out between meetings. This all needs to be determined at the outset of the financial year so that the Committee is not considering unnecessary issues, reacting to foreseeable events or commenting on matters that can no longer be influenced.

It is expected that the Governance Committee will meet 4 times per year but the Committee can decide to increase this if it is felt necessary to ensure that the Committee meets its Terms of Reference. The quorum for the meeting will be 50% of the Members.

### **Assurance Framework**

The majority of assurances to the Committee should come from management and auditors who provide a critical element of independence and assurance. In this context robust systems of risk management and application of an Assurance Framework should be at the core of any Committee's review process.

Therefore the Governance Committee will need to liaise closely with management and other committees dealing with and managing risk in order to minimise any duplication or overlap. The Governance Committee's role is not to manage risks but rather to ensure that the overall system is in place and effective.



## **Key Questions**

This list of questions is not intended to be exhaustive or restrictive, nor should it be treated as a tick list substituting for detailed consideration of the issues it raises. Rather it is intended to act as a "prompt" to help the Governance Committee ensure that their work is comprehensive.

### **Strategic processes**

- How is the organisational risk management culture generated and is it appropriate?
- Is there a comprehensive process for identifying and evaluating risk and for deciding what levels of risk are tolerable?
- Is the Risk Register an appropriate reflection of the risks facing the organisation?
- Is appropriate ownership of risk in place?
- How are these risks being managed?
- What are the areas of greatest risk to the achievement of the Committee's aims and objectives?
- What areas in the internal control system give management the greatest concern and why?
- How does management know how effective internal control is?
- Is risk management carried out in a way that really benefits the organisation or is it treated as a box ticking exercise?
- Is the organisation as a whole aware of the importance of risk management and of the organisation's risk priorities?
- Does the system of internal control provide indicators of things going wrong?
- How meaningful is the Annual Governance Assurance Statement and what evidence underpins it?
- Does the Governance Statement appropriately disclose action to deal with material problems?
- Have the implications of the results of the effectiveness review been discussed at Management team level?
- Have any major changes been made in internal controls in the past year? Were these made in order to improve existing controls or were they new controls established due to changes in operating systems?
- Are appropriate procedures in place to ensure adequate user involvement in the development of new systems and major system changes, including the design of control checks and balances?

- What were the most significant internal control weaknesses uncovered by internal and external auditors during the period?
- What is the auditors' view on the balance between the risk of error in the present internal control system and the cost of additional controls?

#### Planned activity

- Is the internal audit strategy appropriate for delivery of a positive reasonable assurance on the whole of risk control and governance?
- Will the annual audit plan achieve the objectives of the internal audit strategy and in particular is it adequate to facilitate a positive, reasonable assurance?
- Does internal audit have appropriate resources, including skills, to deliver its objectives?
- Are there any issues arising from management not accepting internal audit recommendations and are agreed internal audit recommendations appropriately actioned?
- What assurance is there about the quality of internal audit's work?
- Is there appropriate co-operation between the internal and external auditors?

#### Policies of the organisation

- Is there an appropriate counter fraud policy in place and are losses suitable recorded?
- Are suitable processes in place to ensure accurate financial records are kept?
- Does financial control, including the structure of delegations, enable the organisation to achieve its objectives with good value for money?
- Have any cases of fraud or illegal, questionable or unethical activities been uncovered which might affect the accounts or which could cause embarrassment?
- Are issues raised by the external auditors given appropriate attention?

#### Response to audit activity

- Are agreed procedures in place for monitoring progress with the implementation of recommendations?
- If management reject audits recommendations, which the auditor stand by, are suitable resolution procedures in place?

#### Assurances

- Do the assurances available facilitate the drafting of a meaningful Governance Statement?

- Do those producing the assurances understand fully the scope of the assurance they are being asked to provide and the purpose to which it will be put?
- What mechanisms are in place to ensure the assurances are reliable?
- Are the assurances 'positively' stated (ie – premised on sufficient, relevant evidence to support them)?
- Do the assurances draw out material weaknesses or losses, which should be addressed?

#### The Governance Committee itself

- How does the Governance Committee know if it is being effective in achieving its terms of reference and adding value to corporate governance and control systems of the organisation?
- Is the Committee content that it has received sufficient training and has the appropriate skills mix?
- Is the Committee content with its level of understanding of the purpose of the work of the organisation?
- Is the Committee content that it has sufficient time to give proper consideration to its business?
- Is the Committee content that it is avoiding any conflict of interest?
- Is there any evidence of the Committee's advice having an impact on the organisation?

#### Terms of Reference

The Committee comprises 6 members of the Authority.

#### Purpose

To provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the control and risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process. The Governance Committee will also sit as the Council's Audit Committee receiving reports from both internal and external audit, approving the audit programmes and ensuring sufficient resources to deliver the internal audit service.

#### Functions

1. Agree and then periodically review the Terms of Reference in relation to the Internal Audit Function.
2. Ensure effective internal audit and internal control arrangements.
3. Receive the Internal Audit Annual Programme of Work.
4. Receive audit activity reports and assurances contained therein relating to the level of internal control and risk management across the Council.

5. Ensure that audit recommendations agreed by management are implemented effectively.
6. Consider external audit reports and make recommendations to the Council.
7. Ensure effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements.
8. Seek assurances that effective action is being taken on risk and internal control related areas of weakness.
9. Receive the Governance Assurance Statement and monitor implementation of the action plan.
10. Approve the Council's audited Annual Statement of Accounts, income and expenditure and balance sheet prior to 30 September.
11. Monitor and review the Constitution and make recommendations to Council.
12. Consider electoral matters and Boundary Reviews and make recommendations to Council.
13. Consider reports of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel and make recommendations to Council.
14. Independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control information.

#### Role and responsibilities of Governance Committee members

Members of the Governance Committee and nominated substitutes are required to:

- scrutinise draft and final accounts in September each year
- consider audit reports on Council services
- receive and approve the Internal Audit action plan
- receive and consider the annual Audit and Inspection letter
- consider risk assessment and management
- review the Council's Constitution and recommend changes
- consider electoral and boundary review matters
- make recommendations to Council
- receive regular training and updating on relevant matters.

#### Skills and competencies required

- attention to detail
- understanding of Council functions and services
- understanding of audit processes
- familiarity with Council's statement of accounts and supporting processes
- familiarity with the Council's Constitution
- understanding of corporate risk and its management

NB: These skills and competencies are in addition to those required to be an elected Member of the Council.

#### **Programme of meeting dates** (to be confirmed at Annual Council on 14 May 2014)

26 June 2014  
 25 September 2014 (Final Accounts)  
 4 December 2014  
 26 March 2015