



**MINUTES OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING DATE** **Wednesday, 13 March 2024**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor Alan Platt (Chair), Councillor Mark Clifford (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Gordon France, Christine Heydon, Samantha Martin, Dedrah Moss, Jean Sherwood and Neville Whitham

**OFFICERS:** Caroline Wolfenden (Director of Change and Delivery), Dave Whelan (Head of Legal and Procurement), Dawn Highton (Head of Audit and Risk), Caroline Winstanley (Interim Transformation and Change Team Leader), Jacqui Murray (Senior Auditor) and Ben Storey (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** Charlotte Fitch (Independent Person)

**OTHER MEMBERS:** Peter Ripley (Independent Person) and attending virtually, Georgia Jones (Grant Thornton) and Gareth Winstanley (Grant Thornton)

**23.G.68 Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Charlotte Fitch (Independent Person)

**23.G.69 Declarations of Any Interests**

No interests were declared.

**23.G.70 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 8 February 2024 of Governance Committee**

**Resolved: (Unanimously)**

That the minutes of the last meeting, held on Thursday 8 February 2024, be agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

**23.G.71 Internal Audit Plan April - September 2024**

The Senior Auditor presented the report which sought approval of the proposed internal audit plan between April and September 2024.

The report outlined details of the planned work in this period, including the rationale for reviewing each area, resources to be allocated to each review and performance targets for the internal audit team.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the update provided following a review into the council's physical security and environmental controls. Progress was being made with the implementation of agreed actions with a full update to be included within the annual report that will be presented at the next meeting in May 2024.

Further explanation of the satisfaction rating performance indicator was provided to members, with a survey carried out seeking feedback on different aspects of each review encompassing the scope, the professionalism of the internal audit team, timings and timescales and whether agreed actions mitigated identified risks. Members were pleased to note that current performance of this indicator was around 98% satisfaction.

In response to a query, the Committee were assured that the internal audit team were adequately resourced to complete the proposed plan and that the number and breadth of the reviews to be undertaken would provide sufficient evidence for the Head of Audit and Risk to formulate their annual opinion.

**Resolved: (Unanimously)**

That the Internal Audit Plan April- September 2024 and associated indicators be approved.

**23.G.72 Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework Refresh**

The Director of Change and Delivery presented this report which highlighted changes to the Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework and sought the Committee's recommendation for its approval by the Executive Cabinet.

The framework sets out the process and criteria for identifying key contracts and partnerships and outlines the additional governance and monitoring arrangements that are implemented, linking in with the wider risk management system.

Changes in the refreshed framework centred around aligning processes with South Ribble through a shared document and the addition of criteria and governance checklists designed to support officers in monitoring key contracts and partnerships. Further work around reviewing current key contracts and partnerships against new criteria and reviewing other existing collaborative arrangements to identify whether they should be recategorized and receive additional scrutiny was also highlighted.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the framework would be initiated at the procurement stage of any new contract or partnership arrangement if the relevant criteria was met and additional monitoring was required. Furthermore, checks around the suitability and sustainability of contractors would be identified at the same stage.

The Committee welcomed the offer of the outcomes of the review into other existing collaborative arrangements being presented at a future meeting.

**Resolved: (Unanimously)**

That the Committee recommends the refreshed Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework be approved by the Executive Cabinet, subject to minor amendments to

clarify when the framework is initiated and when the suitability and sustainability of contractors is identified.

### **23.G.73 Social Media Protocol**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the report and provided background with the Governance Committee identifying a need for a protocol around social media specifically for elected members. The draft document had been developed following discussions at previous meetings and through the establishment of a working group to review and direct its content. Approval of the draft social media protocol was sought, with a recommendation it be presented to Full Council for adoption.

The Committee welcomed the new protocol document and approved proposed amendments suggested by the Committee's Independent Person around strengthening points around the risk of prosecution to individual members, highlighting defamation under the legal considerations section, rephrasing the sentence that referenced robust political debate and including more affirmative language in the 'do's and don'ts' section.

Members also requested that the protocol be provided to election candidates as well as elected members.

#### **Resolved: (Unanimously)**

That the Social Media Protocol be approved and recommended to Full Council for adoption, subject to several minor amendments discussed.

### **23.G.74 RIPA Application Update**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that no RIPA applications had been made since the last meeting of the Governance Committee.

### **23.G.75 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair**

The Chair thanked and wished the Head of Legal and Procurement and Deputy Monitoring Officer well in their last meeting before leaving the council.

With it being the last meeting of the municipal year, the Chair also thanked committee members for their time and effort over the past twelve months.

Chair

Date