

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### **Report to Audit and Governance Committee**

**Date:** 23 September 2024

**Report of:** Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director (Finance and ICT)

**Subject:** COMMITTEE REPORT

#### **SUMMARY**

This report seeks to update Members on a variety of assurances which are within the functions of the Audit and Governance Committee, that do not require a full report in their own right. The report is set out into two parts. Part One is for noting and Part Two sets out those items for approval or endorsement.

Included in this report is, the Committees Work Programme, an amendment to the Council's Constitution and the annual overview of complaints relating to the Member Code of Conduct.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Audit and Governance Committee:-

- a) note the contents of Part One of the report for information; and
- b) consider the amendments to the Constitution as set out in Part Two of the report.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The purpose of this report is to reduce the number of agenda items by including items in one report that are significant but do not justify a full report in their own right. Part One includes matters for noting by the Committee and as usual includes the Committee Work Programme. Included in Part Two are matters for endorsement which on this occasion includes an update to the Council's Constitution.

## **PART ONE: Matters for noting**

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **Work Programme**

2. The standard item in this part of the Committee report is the Committee's Work Programme for 2024/25. The full work programme was endorsed by Council in April this year and Appendix A sets out a simplified version of the work programme highlighting any changes since the last meeting. This provides the Committee with an opportunity to note and comment on the work of the Committee throughout the municipal year.
3. In particular, Members should note that there are now clear timescales and processes agreed on how to finalise the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts. There is now an item scheduled for the November 2024 committee to receive the Completion Report from the external auditors or to approve delegated authority for the Chairman and Section 151 Officer to finalise the accounts outside of the meeting by 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
4. Officers encourage Members to consider the items set out in the work programme and welcome any suggested additions or changes.

### **STANDARDS AND ETHIC**

#### **Member Complaints 2023/24**

5. As set out in the Constitution at Part Two – Chapter 8 – Functions of the Audit and Governance Committee, the Committee have a responsibility to consider complaints against members' conduct. The Monitoring Officer will conduct investigations into any complaints made against a Member and in extreme cases will ask that an Audit and Governance Standards Sub Committee be convened to consider the complaint, as set out in the Constitution at Part One – Chapter 9 - Audit and Governance Standards Sub Committee.
6. In addition to the above, in order to provide the Committee with an overview of the Member complaints received by the Monitoring Officer the following information is provided annually.
7. In 2023/24 the Council's Monitoring Officer received 11 complaints against members. Of the 11 complaints received, all were resolved at an early stage of the complaints procedure as it was established that no breach of the code of conduct had occurred. Table 1 below shows how this compares with the

previous years.

Table 1:

Year	Number of Member Complaints	Breaches to Members Code of Conduct
2022/23	8	0
2021/22	27	0
2020/21	7	0

8. The last breach of the Members Code of Conduct resulting in an Audit and Governance Standards Sub-Committee been called was in 2016.

### **PART TWO: Matters for endorsement**

#### **KEY POLICY REVIEW - AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

##### **Common Seal Delegation**

9. This section of the report asks Members to consider an amendment to the Constitution. Following the recent changes to the titles of the Senior Leadership Team a change has been identified in order to align the Scheme of Delegation to Officers to paragraph 13.8 of Part One – Chapter 13 – Legal, Financial and Contract Matters.
10. Appendix B sets out the proposed change which it is hoped adds clarity to the delegation of sealing documents. This will also ensure that when future changes are made to the Officer titles, once the Scheme of Delegation to Officers is updated this will be reflected within 13.8.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

11. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report.

#### **CONCLUSION**

12. Members are asked to note the contents of Part One of this report and consider the update to the Constitution as set out in Part Two.

#### **Appendices: -**

Appendix A: Work Programme 2024/25

Appendix B: Proposed changes to Part One – Chapter 13 – Legal, Financial and Contract Matters of the Council's Constitution.

**Background Papers: None**

**Reference Papers:**

The Constitution

Audit and Governance Work Programme – 11 March 2024

Council Minutes – 09 April 2024

**Enquiries:**

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