

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held in the Council Chambers, Tedder Hall, Manby Park, Louth on Wednesday, 6th July, 2022 at 10.15 am.

PRESENT

Councillor Will Grover (Chairman)
Councillor David Andrews (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Adrian Benjamin, Colin Davie, Rosalind Jackson, Jill Makinson-Sanders, Graham Williams and Terry Taylor.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Christine Marshall	- Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) and S151 Officer
John Medler	- Assistant Director Governance Monitoring Officer
Samantha Knowles	- Assistant Director, Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
Ellie Stacey	- Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate), PSPS Limited
Matthew Waller	- Principal Auditor, Assurance Lincolnshire
Lucy Pledge	- Head of Service – Corporate Audit and Risk Management, Assurance Lincolnshire
Jon Machej	- External Auditors
Suzanne Rolfe	- Insights & Transformation Manager
Joanne Paterson	- Democratic Services Officer
Elaine Speed	- Democratic Services Officer

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Danny Brookes, George Krawiec and Walter Leschenko.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

Members were invited to disclose any relevant interests. No interests were disclosed.

5. MINUTES:

Members queried the attendance of Directors/Chief Executive at future Audit and Governance Meetings. The Chairman had written a letter requesting attendance at future meetings

Members also commented on the state of our economy in terms of the global situation. The Section 151 Officer confirmed discussions would take place with Cabinet Members in terms of overall finances of the authority moving forward.

A Member wished to make an amendment to the previous minutes, (page 12 of the agenda refers) to reflect that Councillor Will Grover on entering

the meeting did not take the Chair as stated in the minutes. The Committee supported this amendment.

Further to the amendment above, the Open and Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th April 2022 and the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 12th May 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

6. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE:

The Chairman provided an update to the Committee. The key highlights included:-

- Training Programme and Draft Work Programme for comment.
- Remote Pension Fund training to take place on 28th July virtually. (The Chairman was very keen to see the return of training between Committee Meetings and encouraged Members of the Committee to make every effort to attend the training).
- The Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report was on the agenda for noting which would subsequently be taken to Full Council for further comment.
- It was highlighted that use of the word 'adequate' within the Internal Audit Report was actually 'rather good' in this instance.

7. ACTION SHEET

The Deputy Chief Executive Corporate and Section 151 Officer outlined the actions from the Meeting held on 13th April 2022, (pages 27-32 refers).

It was noted that the Procurement Strategy would be shared with Audit and Governance in due course. Further actions regarding the Procurement and Management Framework (Towns Fund Projects) (pages 31 of the agenda refers) would be reported back by the Deputy Chief Executive Programme Delivery in due course.

With regards to action No. 53, renegotiation of the Magna Vitae contract, an update was provided and it was confirmed that PSPS Ltd were doing checks and balances on the new finance system.

Overall there had been good progress on the actions.

In response to queries, the Assistant Director Finance advised that the Procurement Strategy was still being prepared and Members were assured once a document was ready it would be recirculated for consideration. Members were further advised that there had been some recent recruitment activity which had secured a Head of Procurement for both ELDC, SHLC and BBC and therefore additional resources were being allocated to this going forward.

8. AUDIT & GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT 21/22:

The Interim Assistant Director Governance and Monitoring Officer presented to Members the Audit and Governance Annual Report 21/22.

Members were advised that the report was attached at Appendix A to the covering report. This report had been presented previously and was a factual report which had now been extended to include summaries of key activities undertaken during the previous year.

It should be noted that it was not a constitutional requirement for this report to be submitted to Full Council. However, it was suggested to the Committee that they may wish to approve the report for circulation to Full Council to raise awareness of the work of the Committee over the previous 12 months, and in line with the Committee's role of supporting good governance and giving assurance to the Council of the work that the Committee had been undertaking.

Members suggested that this report be presented at Council by the Chairman of Audit Committee, to encourage Councillors to ask questions and recognise the important role of this Committee. The Chairman acknowledged the point raised and pledged to provide a full report to Council in future.

Reference was made to the background to the report, paragraph 1.2, (page 34 of the report refers) it was felt that there needed to be reference to the CIPFA Code of Practice in terms of how Audit Committee's complied with this code. It was confirmed that this would be actioned and included in the report that goes to Full Council.

RESOLVED

That the Audit and Governance Annual Report 2021-22 be noted and the report be presented to the Full Council for approval.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT:

The Head of Audit and Risk Management presented Members with the Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22, (pages 43 to 67 of the agenda refer). The purpose of the report was to give the annual opinion and outcome of the internal work undertaken during the year.

It was reported that overall, this was a positive report for Committee. The key messages included direction of travel where improvements were required which was increasing, identifying any areas for inclusion in the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and the outcome of the External Quality Assurance Inspection undertaken in March.

Members attention was drawn to the health check undertaken and key highlights (page 49 of the report refers).

In terms of the Invest East Lindsey (IEL) Company, the Head of Audit and Risk Management would be taking this forward to Leadership Team in July and subsequently September Audit and Governance Committee. In terms of annual governance, the following highlights were made: -

- CIPFA had issued some guidance on good practice in Local Authority Companies, this would be included within the report.
- Number of areas of red assurance highlighted as part of the management assurance mapping process, relating to procurement and ICT project management.

The following update was provided: -

- No restriction in scope, some of the delays in the audit process were due to hybrid working which had taken longer. The Internal Audit Manager would be working with the Council to make this process much smoother.
- One of the key challenges had been resources, including low resources in the sector which impacted delivery.
- It was pleasing to report that there had been successful recruitment and additional auditors engaged over the previous 3 months, also the Internal Audit Manager had delivered 60% of the Internal Audit Plan.
- Delivery of the annual opinion and external inspection around delivery of services by an independent person undertaken by CIPFA in March and fully conformed with it being recognised that actions taken were appropriate and robust.
- Outcome of audits undertaken, list of audits completed with their performance opinions and our assurance information were detailed with the report (page 61 and 62 refers)

Comments and questions were responded to as follows: -

Reference was made to fraud risk (page 50 of the report refers) it was noted that this was not currently reported to Audit, and Governance and it was suggested that this be received in future. With regard to fraud risk the Section 151 Officer advised that Officers were currently in the process of re-instating these reports and were look at commissioning externally to continue to have this work undertaken.

Furthermore, the Council contributed to the Lincolnshire Counter Fraud Partnership and Officers would be looking at pro-active work around grants. This piece of work would be incorporated within Internal Audit Plan by Counter Fraud Specialists at Assurance Lincolnshire. The

Lincolnshire County Council's Counter Fraud Annual Plan had been recently published and covered areas of growing risk around grants it was confirmed this would be brought back to a future meeting.

Section 106 agreements had received limited assurance, for internal control, what was the practical result of this? It was confirmed that the Section 106 had displayed a variety of issues in the audit, and these were still being finalised. Members would be able to monitor this via the progress reports.

In terms of Precepts Errors and how many people were affected by this, Members were advised that this had been rectified for those precept authorities that were disadvantaged the following day. The rest of the process was ongoing, and the majority of funds had now been returned.

In terms of procurement, auditors would expect checks and balances by Management/Leadership Team via close monitoring of spending, procurement and contract registers. The Section 151 Officer assured Members that in terms of internal controls and application of the constitution, her team had been working to ensure processes were in place and being complied with. Additional support had also been sought to assist officers with the Towns Fund Projects and access to Crown Commercial Services, to support that. Overall, the Council was making good headway in terms of the strategy, this would require high level resource and would be forthcoming.

In terms of business grants, the scrutiny process by Government had already commenced and investigations had already taken place. It was reported that East Lindsey's performance around that process had been good and there were no concerns currently.

(N.B Councillor Makinson Sanders declared that her son had managed the grants for East Lindsey).

Further comments were voiced around staff training on governance, to support officers working with three different Council Constitutions. Further reference was made to the audit plan changes and why both the Strategic Alliance VFM aspects had been removed, noting one of the major roles of Audit Committee was to ensure VFM for the ratepayer. Members were assured that constitution and governance training would be arranged, noting the requirement for work on alignment of the constitutions, whilst recognising the three sovereign councils.

In terms of Audit Plan changes, the Internal Audit Manager advised that VFM was incorporated in this year's plan and comparison work would be taking place. Furthermore, Procurement, Towns Fund Projects and ICT all featured in this year's audit plan.

In terms of staffing, various factors were the transfer of a team and building resilience; impact on the workforce in terms of staff changes i.e.

remote working; staff being poached/promoted; and changes to the employment market.

A successful recruitment exercise had been undertaken and Officers would be utilising apprenticeships to build resilience further.

RESOLVED

That the Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22 be noted.

10. DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate), PSPS Limited presented Members with the unaudited 2021/22 Financial Statements including the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval by the Section 151 Officer in advance of the 31st July deadline.

Members were advised that this was the third year-end process that had been undertaken where the deadlines had been extended as a result of the pandemic. The team was now aiming for the deadline of 31st July 2022 and the audited accounts were required to be published by 30th September 2022. The accounts would be formally published on the Council's website following today's meeting marking the formal 6-week public inspection period.

Members were advised that the account had been produced in line with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and in line with the Council's Accounting Policies which were brought before this Committee in April. An additional accounting policy had been subsequently added to reflect the new requirement for Invest East Lindsey (IEL) to produce group accounts.

It was further reported that: there had been increased activity around IEL and it was therefore considered material for the 21/22 accounts to produce group accounts and incorporate this. The group accounts were still in progress and were not included in the appendix to this report however, these would be covered when the accounts were brought back for review as part of the audited accounts process.

Key points on the draft Accounts had been highlighted earlier to Audit and Governance Committee at a virtual session: -

- The formation of the South and East Lincolnshire Partnership and new Senior Management Structure which would change the way the Council reported on these statements to reflect the new Assistant Director structure.
- The impact of the pandemic in terms of Covid grants, associated transactions, and increased business rates collection fund deficit, although this had reduced from the previous year.
- Due to the change in ownership from PSPS from 1st April 2021, the Council now incorporated Boston as a new shareholder within PSPS

and therefore East Lindsey's share of the PSPS accounts was consolidated into East Lindsey.

Members were referred to Appendix A, unaudited financial statements (page 5-113 of the supplementary agenda refers). Some of the key highlights included: -

- Reference to the Narrative Report (pages 15-16 of the report refer) and the general fund outturn table presented by Assistant Director Area, resulting in an underspend of £0.868m at year-end.
- Reference to the sources of income and expenditure by Assistant Director, which gave an overall view of the financial performance of the Council during 2021/22. It was noted that the Narrative Report only covered the finances of East Lindsey and did not incorporate any figures relating to PSPS.
- Capital Financial Performance the outturn table had shown a £19m underspend against the budget.
- Further details on general fund and capital outturn were included in the outturn report presented to Executive Board this week.

Members were reminded of the purpose of the Financial Statements (page 18 of the agenda refers) which included the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement and Notes to the Accounts.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate) highlighted some key movements year on year: -

- General Fund Assets – the Council had achieved increased income due to increased car parking income.
- Economic Growth – there was reduced activity on Covid grants, although grant transactions were still being undertaken.
- Increased costs of operational services around the neighbourhoods' area and increased income around planning.
- A total cost of services of £18.767m - further details of transactions undertaken around parish precepts, drainage board levies, investment income and changes in fair value of property funds.

Members were guided through the key highlights of the balance sheet which gave a snapshot of the financial position of East Lindsey as of 31st March 2022. The cash flow statement showed there were quite some significant movements in year on the cash flow and this was due to the nature of the collection fund deficit, grants and purchase and sale of assets.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer, (Corporate), drew Members' attention to the further notes to the accounts, noting that there were some quite significant notes supporting the I&E (pages 43 of agenda refers). Reference was made to Note 6, Expenditure and Funding Analysis. Further reference was made to Note 7, (page 42-43 refers) and further disclosure notes around pensions, assets etc.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward:-

Members referred to the breakdown on the deficit on business rates. Further reference was made to the Sources of Income Chart (page 14 of the report refers) in particular regarding the income of £5.9m in Business Rates and how that was received, noting that this was significantly down and what the reasons were for this? In response it was clarified that the graph referred to, had shown the actual Business Rates budget income of £5.9m for the year this being how the Council was required to account for it. In terms of the deficit, this had increased due to government granting some extended retail reliefs for businesses as a result of the pandemic.

The Government had also compensated East Lindsey in the form of a Section 31 Grant, so whilst the deficit has increased, the Section 31 grant had now been received to compensate for that loss of income. It was explained to Members how the Council was required to account for it in terms of the deficit being accounted for in the next financial year not the current financial year.

In terms of the contraction of yield, it was about understanding how the yield was effectively performing as this affected all the parties that were receiving funds from the collection fund. Members were assured that this was being monitored with the Revenues and Benefits Team.

A technical error was noted under Note 1 to the Accounts regarding Land Sites in particular Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve (page 33 of the report refers).

Reference was made to the Reserves and balances, (page 17 of the report refers). The table showed that the Council had a budget for carbon reduction set on 1st April 2021 as £106k, however at the end of March 2022, this looked to be unspent. Members considered that some of this money could have been spent on carbon reduction measures.

Reference was made to the current economic climate, outlook, and risk section within the Narrative Report (page 19 of the agenda refers) regarding the Fair Funding Review. Further comments were made around reduced funding for Local Government over the next two years and considered this should be factored in.

Further reference was made to the market conditions within the report that acknowledged there had been challenging times, however the assumptions made about the future needed to recognise the circumstances the Council were dealing with nationally- how would the Council look to address these challenges in the future? The Section 151 Officer confirmed this matter would be taken forward and assured members these factors were part of the considerations for next year's budget setting process.

Further comments and questions were raised around staffing costs in terms of the current joint arrangements, position with staffing numbers given workforce changes and use of consultants. The Section 151 Officer advised that in terms of the use of agency and consultancy staff the use wasn't significant. It was about ensuring the Council had a clear view of its establishment and how that was developing and moving forward.

Further discussion ensued around workforce challenges including competing with the private sector and those on 2/3-day contracts that would usually be FTE staff and the challenges going forward. Members were assured that the Council was looking at developing its own staff internally, i.e. bringing in apprenticeships/graduate schemes rather than paying agency and consultancy fees.

Further reference was made to the Capital outturn table 2021/22 regarding the Fitness Suite Refurbishment (Page 16 of the report refers).

It was confirmed that regarding the fitness suite, it was financially beneficial to purchase than lease equipment and officers explained the reasoning behind this.

A sinking fund was referred to and the section 151 Officer agreed to look into this.

Reference was made to the significant assumptions, for the Council (page 79 of the report refers). It was noted that the significant assumption used for the increase in salaries for this particular document was 3.5% for 2021/22 and it was queried what the increase in salaries was assumed to be for year 2022/23? Members were advised that this was in respect of pension valuations not the Councils budgeting, the pensions actuaries were making certain assumptions that may well be different to the Council's assumptions around its salaries and budgeting.

Further comments were made around assumptions for last year and what a 1% increase in salary across the board would equate to in terms of costs.

Members were advised that these negotiations were still underway and with inflation being at its current rate, the Council would have to make certain assumptions around where pay inflation would be for 23/24. Officers were undertaking some modelling around pay costs, to understand the worst- and best-case scenarios, all of which would need factoring into the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

It was acknowledged this was going to be a challenging going forward due to inflationary pressures.

RESOLVED

That the Draft Financial Statements for 2021/22 be noted.

11. ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT:

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate) presented the Annual Treasury Report on behalf of the Treasury Manager, (pages 69-92 of the agenda refer). The purpose of the report was to present the Annual Treasury Review of the Council's activities for 2021/22 including the prudential and treasury indicators, (Appendix A, page 69 of the report refers).

Members were advised that although the report had been included, the accounts were still in progress. As such there were some amendments to the capital and financing figures within Appendix A that would be highlighted, and subject to change as part of the auditing of the accounts process.

Members were referred to the Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing 2021/22, (paragraph 2, page 74 refers). Reference was made to the capital expenditure the actual figure for 2021/22 being £9.436m and unfinanced capital expenditure of £1.880m, this constituted the establishment of Invest East Lindsey.

Members were referred to the Council's Overall Borrowing Need, (Paragraph 3, page 65 refers). Reference was made to the Council's Opening Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) balance this being £22.426m as opposed to an estimate of £22.444m with the addition of the Unfinanced Capital Expenditure of £1.880m.

The Council also had a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP) reversal in the year. It was noted that the Council set VRP aside at the end of each year-end to be the value of the movement in the fair value of the property funds. However due to an increase in the fair value of those property funds at the year end, the Council reversed some of that VRP at the year-end to the value of £1.194m, the closing CFR balance being £25.5m.

Members were referred to the gross borrowing and CFR, (page 76 of the report refers). It was noted that the Gross Borrowing Position was £20m and total CFR of £25.5m as updated previously.

Members were referred to the Treasury Position as of 31st March 2022, (Paragraph 4, page 77 of the report refers). In terms of the Fixed Rate Temporary and PWLB borrowing, the figure was £20.149m this was to enable the Council to include the accrued interest on the borrowing which was consistent with the previous year. The CFR figure being updated from £22.552m to £25.5m leaving an under borrowing position of £5.351m and total investment including cash equivalents of just over £82.5m. Therefore, the net investment of the Council was actually £62.365m.

Members were referred to the Investment Portfolio, it was highlighted that the actual investment as of 31st March 2022 had increased from 31st March 2021. As mentioned previously there had been an increase in

government grants received in 2021/22 however these had not been paid out until 2022/23.

Members were referred to the Strategy for 2021/22, (page 79 refers), it was reported that investment returns remained close to zero for much of 2021/22.

Members were referred to the chart detailing the PWLB borrowing noting that this had started to rise from December 2021.

Members were referred to Section 6, Borrowing Outturn, which confirmed that the Council had not undertaken any additional borrowing during the financial year.

Members were also referred to the Investment Outturn for 2021/22, reference was made to the reduced balance sheet resources incorporating balances, earmarked reserves, and usable capital receipts of around £3.7m reduction. As mentioned previously the Council had utilisation of reserves set aside in previous years to offset the prior collection from deficit.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate) set out the investment outturn position (paragraph 7, pages 83-84 refer).

Members were referred to the economy and interest rates it was noted that commentary had been provided by Link Group, (pages 84-86 of the report refers). Furthermore, Members were referred to Section 9, Other Issues, (pages 86 refers) around how the Council was required to reflect the fair value of property fund investments in the balances at year-end.

Members were referred to the Non-Treasury Investment: Property Funds table Appendix A, (pages 86-88 refer) this showed the costs of the property funds at just under £28m. The second table displayed the current Asset Value of those property funds at the year-end which was just over £30.4m, a total gain since purchase of £2.452m and total gain in the year of £3.877m and as mentioned earlier there was a previous loss.

Reference was made to the property fund breakdown (Appendix A, page 89 refers) which showed the position of all the property funds individually and total revenue in 2021-22 being £1.013m.

No comments and questions were raised.

RESOLVED

That the Annual treasury Report detailed at Appendix A of the report now submitted be approved.

12. RISK MANAGEMENT POSITION:

The Insights and Transformation Manager presented Members with the Strategic Risk Register as at Q4 Report, end of March 2022 (pages 93 to 110 of the agenda refer).

It was highlighted that there were 5 high risks identified from previous reports these included the following 5 High Risks:-

- Reduction in government funding to deliver Council services and local priorities.
- Reduction in Council income
- Impact of Covid19 on the local economy – people and business
- Uncertainty of future Lincshire flood defence scheme.
- Technical Infrastructure Failure
- Cyber Incident

It was noted that the above were externally driven risks and if they were to happen the impact would be high. Members were assured that there was mitigation and controls in place, and as such they continued to be reviewed and improved. Further training and reminders to users and staff would assist around what could be done to help with this.

It was highlighted that the covering report included an update on the Operational Risk Register. The risks were reviewed quarterly by officers, the plan being that for the Quarter from now - end of September Officers would be reviewing the Operational Risk Register again looking in detail at the risk themselves, emerging risks and mitigation. This would come forward to Audit and Governance Committee in due course.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

A comment was made around the risk of inflation on our budgets and the fact that this has not been included within the risk register. Members were advised that the Risk Register was reviewed regularly and any new risks could be added.

Reference was made to inflation under the financial risks listed, this was something that could be looked at in Quarter 2.

Reference was made to Risk 9, Attainment of revenue through Treasury Management Policies and commercially driven capital expenditure. Comments were made that some of the risks listed were changing, given the widespread inflation and difficult financial circumstances it be noted that this would change pretty quickly. It was also noted that this risk was currently classified as low likelihood and medium impact, however this had a much higher impact.

Further reference was made to the Risk Matrix in relation to Risk 13 Cyber Incident, it was questioned why these featured in 2 different places on the

matrix both low and high likelihood, a Member suggested it be clarified where this sat on the matrix.

The Insights and Transformation Manager explained that this was an error and confirmed that Risk 13 should feature in the high risk category. This would be amended prior to the next report being submitted.

RESOLVED

That the Risk Management Position Report be noted.

13. DRAFT AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 22/23:

The Assistant Director Governance and Monitoring Officer presented Members with the Draft Audit and Governance Committee Work Programme 2022/23.

Members were advised that this focused on the key pieces of work which were known to be coming forward to upcoming meetings scheduled in the Committee timetable for 2022/23. The intention was to append the Work Programme to the Audit and Governance Annual Report and to present this to Full Council.

The Assistant Director Governance and Monitoring Officer suggested an addition to the Work Programme to include a note to recognise that additional items would be added to the programme as they arose, in particular constitution updates that may come forward during the year. Furthermore, it was proposed that the Work Programme be brought forward to each meeting for review.

A Member noted that the Internal Audit Report on Invest East Lindsey needed adding to the Work Programme for the September meeting.

The Interim Assistant Director Governance and Monitoring Officer advised that any completed audits would be dealt with under the Internal Audit Progress Report. In addition, a report around Fraud would need to be incorporated into the Work Programme.

Members suggested a report on how the Council was administering the BID also form part of the Work Programme.

The Chairman understood that the BID was an external organisation and the Council was only responsible for administering the collection.

The Section 151 Officer clarified that the BID was a separate organisation. The Council effectively acted as billing authority purely for the sums to the various parties on the list the same methodology as a parish levying council tax bills to parishioners in its patch.

In terms of the work undertaken by the Council and PSPS this was in accordance with legislation and Members were further assured that all the normal checks and balances were in place for that process. As such there was no indication that there would be any difficulties or issues associated with the way the Council were acting as billing authority on this particular matter.

Following which it was,

RESOLVED:

That the Draft Audit and Governance Committee Work Programme 2022/23 be noted.

14. MONITORING OFFICER UPDATE:

The Interim Assistant Director Governance and Monitoring Officer (MO) provided Members an update:

The Council had approved the LGA Model Code of Conduct at its previous meeting and this had now been updated in the Council's Constitution. Members were advised that a communication had been circulated regarding an option for Members to voluntarily declare their support for the Code. Members were reminded to respond to Democratic Services with their support. Subsequently, this would be published on the website in due course in line with the recommendations agreed by Council.

Further work had been undertaken with Parish and Town Councils who had their own decision making processes and had to adopt a Code of Conduct. It was reported that many had started to adopt the LGA Model Code and an event was taking place this week in Woodhall Spa organised by Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) around training and to encourage take up of the Code.

Further work was being undertaken around the process in which code of conduct complaints were received and this would be reviewed and reported back to the next meeting. Also, further training on the LGA Model Code would be provided in the near future.

In addition, the Code of Corporate Governance was being reviewed across ELDC with a view to bringing an updated Local Code of Corporate Governance forward in line with the CIPFA and Solace Framework which had been published.

Members were invited to put forward any comments and questions:-

- In terms of reference to Area Committees in the Constitution the Assistant Director Governance and Monitoring Officer would look into this with a view to updating this section.

- In terms of the voluntary declaration this was discussed at this Committee and had proceeded as a recommendation to Council. The Code of Conduct now applied to all Members as adopted. And the process for voluntarily supporting it was now being enacted by the Monitoring Officer.
- In response to a query around a full review of Constitution, Members were advised that the legislation that permitted remote meetings was temporary legislation and no longer applied.

In terms of Monitoring and review of the Constitution this was ongoing and Officers were focusing on key priority areas firstly. However should Members spot any anomalies it was requested that this be brought to the MO's attention.

Further discussion ensued around how council decisions are taken by remote means, Members were advised that part of that was having processes in place and delegation to allow that to happen. I.e. Chief Executive exercising special urgency powers. In terms of Task and finish groups these were informal meetings and were not bound by same rules as formal committees.

Further comments were made around ensuring that plans were in place for remote meetings should Covid-19 cases surge during the winter months.

RESOLVED

That the update and comments be noted.

The meeting closed at 12.09 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Date.....5th October 2022.....