

Governance and Audit Committee Meeting

**Online Meeting, Virtual Meeting Platform
Tuesday, 28 July 2020 at 18:00**

The Governance and Audit Committee considers and approves the Council's Statement of Accounts and reviews the Council's annual audit letter. The Committee also deals with the Council's governance, risk management and audit arrangements. To make recommendations to the Council on functions such as Elections and bye laws, and determine Community Governance Reviews.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right of access to all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet which may be conducted remotely such as by live audio or video broadcast / webcast. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is published on the Council's website at least five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available here:

<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx>.

Occasionally certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual have to be considered in private. When this is the case an announcement will be made, the live broadcast will end and the meeting will be moved to consider in private.

Have Your Say!

The Council welcomes contributions in the form of written representations from members of the public at most public meetings. One single contribution to each meeting of no longer than 500 words may be made by each person which must be submitted via the form accessed by this link, before noon on the working day before the meeting date: [Governance and Audit Have Your Say!](#)

If you would like to submit representations to a meeting and need to find out more, please refer to the Have Your Say! arrangements here:

<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/HaveYourSay.aspx>.

E-mail: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk
www.colchester.gov.uk

Governance and Audit Committee - Terms of Reference (but not limited to)

Accounts and Audit

To consider and approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and the Council's financial accounts, and review the Council's external auditor's annual audit letter.

Governance

To consider the findings of the annual review of governance including the effectiveness of the system of internal audit and approve the signing of the Annual Governance Statement.

To have an overview of the Council's control arrangements including risk management and in particular with regard to the annual audit plan and work programme, and to approve the policies contained in the Council's Ethical Governance Framework.

Other regulatory matters

To make recommendations to Council on functions such as elections, the name and status of areas and individuals, and byelaws.

To determine and approve Community Governance Reviews.

Standards in relation to Member Conduct

To consider reports from the Monitoring Officer on the effectiveness of the Members' Code of Conduct, and to advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code.

To receive referrals from the Monitoring Officer into allegations of misconduct and to create a Hearings Sub-Committee to hear and determine complaints about Members and Co-opted Members referred to it by the Monitoring Officer.

To conduct hearings on behalf of the Parish and Town Councils and to make recommendation to Parish and Town Councils on improving standards or actions following a finding of a failure by a Parish or Town Councillor.

To inform Council and the Chief Executive of relevant issues arising from the determination of Code of Conduct complaints.

To grant dispensations, and to hear and determine appeals against refusal to grant dispensations by the Monitoring Officer.

To make recommendations to Council regarding the appointment of Independent Persons.

General

To review of the Constitution including governance issues around formal meetings, processes and member training and to make recommendations to Council.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
Governance and Audit Committee
Tuesday, 28 July 2020 at 18:00

The Governance and Audit Committee Members are:

Councillor Chris Pearson
Councillor Sam McCarthy
Councillor Nick Barlow
Councillor Paul Dundas
Councillor Mark Goacher
Councillor Dennis Willetts
Councillor Barbara Wood

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

The Governance and Audit Committee Substitute Members are:

All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

AGENDA
THE LIST OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING
(Part A - open to the public)

Please note that Agenda items 1 to 6 are normally dealt with briefly.

Live Broadcast

Please follow this link to watch the meeting live on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ColchesterCBC>

1 Welcome and Announcements (Virtual Meetings)

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors to the meeting and remind those participating to mute their microphones when not talking. The Chairman will invite all Councillors and Officers participating in the meeting to introduce themselves. The Chairman will, at regular intervals, ask Councillors to indicate if they wish to speak or ask a question and Councillors will be invited to speak in turn by the Chairman. A vote on each item of business will be taken by roll call of each Councillor and the outcome of each vote will be confirmed by the Democratic Services Officer.

2 Substitutions

Councillors will be asked to say if they are attending on behalf of a Committee member who is absent.

3 Urgent Items

The Chairman will announce if there is any item not on the published agenda which will be considered because it is urgent and will explain the reason for the urgency.

4 Declarations of Interest

Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the agenda about which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the item or participating in any vote upon the item, or any other pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.

5 Have Your Say! (Virtual Meetings)

Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes (500 words). Members of the public may register their wish to address the meeting by registering online by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting date. In addition a written copy of the representation will need to be supplied for use in the event of unforeseen technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

6 Review of the Governance Framework and Draft Annual Governance Statement

7 - 24

At the meeting on 23 June 2020 the committee requested additional information relating to the actions of the Council in response to the business interruption that was caused by the Covid 19 pandemic during March 2020, to enable an appropriate assessment of the governance review of 2019/20 and therefore provide assurance to enable the approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20.

7 Local Government Association Consultation on Draft Model Member Code of Conduct

25 - 30

This report informs the Committee of the consultation by the Local Government Association on its draft Model Member Code of Conduct.

8 Initial summary of Digital Council Meetings

31 - 34

At its meeting on 23 June 2020 the Committee requested a brief summary of the implementation of virtual committee meetings, that were required as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This paper gives a summary overview of the work and meetings that have taken place so far, and invites Councillors, and officers, to provide their views to help inform a detailed review of digital meetings, which will be reported to the committee later in the year.

9 Work Programme 2020-21

35 - 38

This report sets out the current Work Programme 2020-2021 for the Governance and Audit Committee. This provides details of the

reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

10 **Exclusion of the Public (not Scrutiny or Executive)**

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Part B
(not open to the public including the press)

28 July 2020

Report of	Assistant Director of Corporate & Improvement Services	Author	Hayley McGrath 508902
Title	Review of the Governance Framework and Draft Annual Governance Statement		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1.0 Executive Summary

At the meeting on 23 June 2020 the committee requested additional information relating to the actions of the Council in response to the business interruption that was caused by the Covid 19 pandemic during March 2020, to enable an appropriate assessment of the governance review of 2019/20 and therefore provide assurance to enable the approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20.

2.0 Recommended Decisions

- 2.1 To consider the summary of the actions/decisions undertaken by Colchester Borough Council during the period 06 to 31 March 2020.
- 2.2 To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20, and agree that it be signed by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive.

3.0 Reasons for Recommended Decisions

- 3.1 Regulation 3 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 states that:
'A relevant authority must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives; ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.'
- 3.2 Regulations 6(1) and (2) go on to place a requirement on the Council to conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control at least once a year, and to report the findings to this committee. Following the review, the committee must approve an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control.
- 3.3 The committee felt that although the previous report was sufficient to provide assurance of the systems of control in place at the Council for the period 01 April 2019 to 29 February 2020, further details were required to provide assurance relating to the actions undertaken in response to the pandemic during March 2020.

4.0 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not to agree the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20. However, this would have an impact on the final accounts process and the Council would not be able to produce a complete Statement of Accounts, which would result in a qualified audit opinion.

5.0 Background Information

- 5.1 The actions undertaken during March have been set out in a table, at appendix 1. This details the actions and the powers under which they were taken.
- 5.2 The original Annual Governance report, including the proposed Annual Governance Statement, from 23 June 2020 is attached at appendix 2.
- 5.3 At the time of this report there have been no concerns raised about the systems and processes in place during March 2020 and the Council's Internal Auditors are currently reviewing the arrangements that were made for payments and payroll during this time. The results from this audit will be reported to this committee later in the year.

6.0 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 There are no equality, diversity or Human Rights implications as a result of this report.

7.0 Strategic Plan Implications

- 7.1 The achievement of the strategic plan requires a sound system of governance to ensure the effective delivery of services. Therefore, improving on existing governance arrangements will help to ensure that the strategic plan objectives can be achieved.

8.0 Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 Risk Management is a fundamental part of the Governance process and a failure to implement the action plan may have an effect on the ability of the Council to control its risks. Therefore, the actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement should be incorporated into the risk management process.

9.0 Other Standard References

- 9.1 There are no direct Publicity, Financial, Consultation, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications as a result of this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Table of Decisions taken during March 2020.

Appendix B – The Annual Governance report to the Governance & Audit Committee 23 June 2020

Appendix A

Decisions Taken during March 2020

The following table provides further information on the types of decisions taken by CBC, as a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic, during March 2020.

Type of Decision	Origin of power to take decision	Decisions taken / Date/ Agreed By:
Emergency Govt implements Contingencies Act and places Local Resilience Forums on formal footing February 2020	<p>The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 imposes a statutory duty on District Council's to respond and act to a civil emergency and are categorised as a category 1 responder (along with the County Council and the emergency services). This means that not only does the Council have to be ready to provide community leadership in an emergency in its area (such as the Coronavirus pandemic), but it must also ensure that it has robust business continuity plans in place and can take operational decisions to ensure that the Council's resources are deployed to support the emergency. This means that the Council must have strong leadership to deal with operational (as well as strategic leadership) and the Full Council recognised this by including in the Council's Constitution a statement of the Chief Executives powers in such situations. i.e.</p> <p>General Emergency Powers contained in CBC Constitution</p> <p>The Chief Executive shall, having as far as possible conferred with the Leader in the event of civic disasters or other issues of extreme emergency, have power to make decisions for the protection of the Borough and its citizens and which cannot be dealt with in accordance with the normal decision making process of the Council.</p> <p>The Chief Executive when acting in the capacity as District Controller in emergency matters has authority to incur expenditure outside amounts included within budgets without recourse to the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations.</p>	None

Type of Decision	Origin of power to take decision	Decisions taken / Date/ Agreed By:
Urgent	<p>CBC Constitution provides</p> <p>Cabinet – If the Proper Officer considers that a matter of urgency has arisen and decision is required before next meeting, the Leader (or in whose absence the Deputy Leader or in whose absence relevant Portfolio Holder), has power to act and report back to next meeting. The decision is not subject to call in. <i>[The Proper Officer is: the Strategic Governance Manager or the Corporate Governance Manager]</i></p> <p>Panels and Committees – If the Proper Officer considers that a matter of urgency has arisen and decision is required before next meeting, the Proper Officer after consulting the Chairman and Group Spokespersons has power to act and report back to next meeting. <i>[The Proper Officer is: the Chief Executive or the Corporate Governance Manager]</i></p> <p>Full Council - If the Proper Officer considers that a matter of urgency has arisen with regard to a non-executive function and decision is required before next meeting , the Proper Officer after consulting the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel or in whose absence the Deputy Chairman), has power to act and report back to next meeting. <i>[The Proper Officer is: the Chief Executive or the Strategic Governance Manager or the Corporate Governance Manager]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID 19 Business Rates Relief and Grants – Government Information provided to businesses 17/03/20 but system not operational in March 2020. AD Customer • COVID 19 Discretionary Business Grants – Government Information provided to businesses 17/03/20 but system not operational in March 2020. AD Customer

Type of Decision	Origin of power to take decision	Decisions taken / Date/ Agreed By:
Operational	Management / Business Continuity Plan issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC Pandemic Plan reviewed in February 2020 and then implemented following declaration on 11 March 2020 by WHO that COVID 19 was characterised as a pandemic • CBC service business continuity plans reviewed in February 2020 • Advice by Govt regarding gatherings and social distancing culminating in lockdown from 23 March 2020 resulting in closure of some CBC services and premises • Regular all Group Leader COVID -19 briefings instituted providing updates on national and CBC operational issues. First one 17 March 2020. • All councillor and MP's e-bulletin briefings initiated providing Borough updates from a range of agencies and CBC operational issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff working from home unless unavoidable – 16/03/20, Covid-19 Coordination Group - EMT & CBH CEO • Planning, Licensing and Scrutiny March meetings cancelled by agreement of respective Chairs. – 18/03/20, Committee Chairs. • Interim Planning and Scrutiny arrangements put in place with agreement with respective chairs – 18/03/20, Committee Chairs • Closure of Council premises: Town Hall, Leisure world, Museums, Rowan House – 18/03/20, Group Leaders. • Cancellation of Events at Council owned premises – 18/03/20, Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd • Weekend noise service suspended – 20/03/20, AD Communities. • Closure of CBC owned beach huts, playgrounds and outdoor gyms – 25/03/20, AD Environment. • HMO/Private Sector Housing home visits suspended – 25/03/20, AD Communities • Recycling and garden waste services suspended – 25/03/20, COO in consultation with PFH and Group Leaders • Car parks at parks/country sites closed – 31/03/20, AD Environment



Governance & Audit Committee

Item

23 June 2020

Report of	Assistant Director of Corporate & Improvement Services	Author	Hayley McGrath 508902
Title	Review of the Governance Framework and Draft Annual Governance Statement		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1.0 Executive Summary

This report relates to the Council's duty to produce an Annual Governance Statement, that reviews the effectiveness of the Council's internal control systems for the 2019/2020 financial year, which is required for the 2019/2020 Statement of Accounts.

2.0 Recommended Decisions

- 2.1 To consider and note the review of the Council's compliance with the seven principles of good governance (CIPFA International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector 2014) including the review of effectiveness of the internal control arrangements.
- 2.2 To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20.

3.0 Reasons for Recommended Decisions

- 3.1 Regulation 3 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 states that:
'A relevant authority must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives; ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.'
- 3.2 Regulations 6(1) and (2) go on to place a requirement on the Council to conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control at least once a year, and to report the findings to this committee. Following the review, the committee must approve an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control.
- 3.3 The review of the system of internal control assesses the Council's compliance with the seven principals of good corporate governance, set out in the 2016 CIPFA / SOLACE guidance – Delivering Good Governance in Local Government, and the effectiveness of the policies and procedures that make up the Council's governance framework. The process also produces a management action plan to address any identified weaknesses.
- 3.4 CIPFA's proper practice requires the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to sign the AGS. They must be satisfied that the document is supported by reliable evidence and accurately reflects the authority's governance and control arrangements.

4.0 Alternative Options

- 4.1 None.

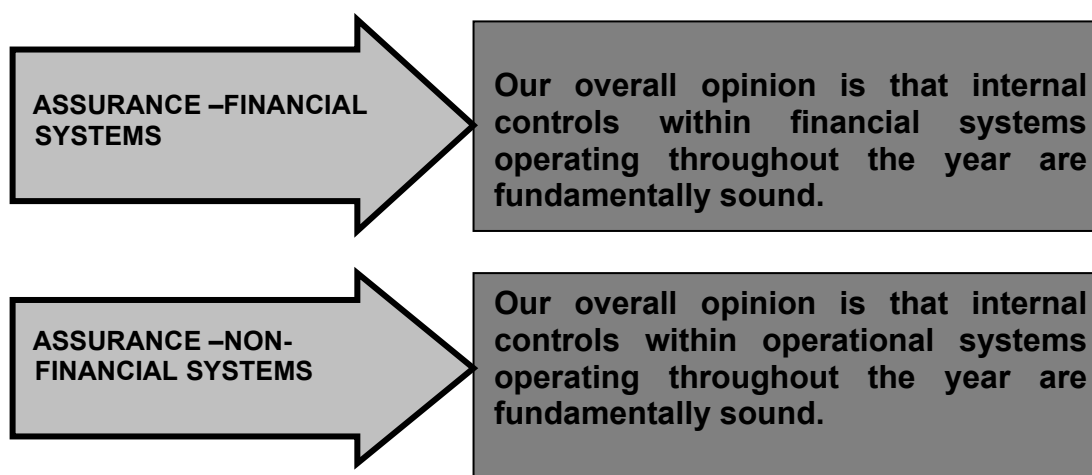
5.0 Background Information

- 5.1 Colchester Borough Council has adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance based on the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' guidance. The purpose of the AGS is to review compliance with the seven principles of good governance outlined in the guidance and the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.
- 5.2 The seven principles of Corporate Governance are:
- Principle 1: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
 - Principle 2: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
 - Principle 3: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
 - Principle 4: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
 - Principle 5: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
 - Principle 6: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
 - Principle 7: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- 5.3 As part of the governance review the Council has to demonstrate the effectiveness of its internal control arrangements, and this is primarily evidenced by the Head of Internal Audit Report, produced by the Council's Internal Audit provider, Mazars. A copy of the report is available as a background paper. The key statement from this report is detailed below: -

2019/20 Year Opinion

Internal Control

From the Internal Audit work undertaken in compliance with the PSIAS (Public Sector Internal Audit Standards) in 2019/20, it is our opinion that we can provide **Substantial Assurance** that the system of internal control in place at Colchester Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2020 accords with proper practice, except for the significant control environment issues as documented in the detailed report. The assurance can be further broken down between financial and non-financial systems, as follows:



- 5.4 The overall summary from the report states:
'we have noted a slight deterioration in the Council's control environment during the audit year. During 2019/20, 25 (74%) of internal audit projects were rated 'full/substantial assurance' compared with 25 (83%) in the prior year. We have noted an increase in the number of internal audit projects rated 'limited assurance' from five (17%) to nine (26%) in 2019/20. There were no 'nil assurance' audits this year, which is consistent with the previous period.
- 5.5 In addition, the further steps taken in producing the AGS have been as follows: -
- A full review of the Council's code of corporate governance including detailed assessment of evidence supporting each principle.
 - Assurance assessments relating to key areas of governance and control have been completed by senior management.
 - Consideration of risk management issues.
 - Detailed follow up of issues with relevant managers to provide evidence of controls in place.
 - Review of the action plan from the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19.
 - Review of the implementation of recommendations made by Internal Audit.
 - Review of issues raised in External Audit reports, principally the Annual Audit Letter.
 - Assessment that the financial arrangements comply with the governance requirements of the CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016).
- 5.6 The AGS for 2019/20 is attached at appendix 1. The format of the statement takes into account both the mandatory pro-forma contained within CIPFA's proper practice guidance, together with subsequent examples of best practice.
- 5.7 The AGS includes a table showing significant internal control issues and planned actions to address these. A more detailed action plan is set out within this report at Appendix 2. The AGS should be an ongoing assessment and therefore a review of the progress against the recommendations will be reported to the Committee later in the financial year.
- 6.0 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**
- 6.1 There are no equality, diversity or Human Rights implications as a result of this report.
- 7.0 Strategic Plan Implications**
- 7.1 The achievement of the strategic plan requires a sound system of governance to ensure the effective delivery of services. Therefore, improving on existing governance arrangements will help to ensure that the strategic plan objectives can be achieved.
- 8.0 Risk Management Implications**
- 8.1 Risk Management is a fundamental part of the Governance process and a failure to implement the action plan may have an effect on the ability of the Council to control its risks. Therefore, the actions should be incorporated into the risk management process.
- 9.0 Other Standard References**
- 9.1 There are no direct Publicity, Financial, Consultation, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications as a result of this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20

Appendix 2 – The Annual Governance Statement Action Plan for 2020/21

Background Papers

Head of Internal Audit report for the year ended 31 March 2020.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

Scope of responsibility

Colchester Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Council is also responsible for ensuring that any companies owned by the Council, and any jointly operated services, also have proper arrangements in place for the governance of their affairs.

The Council has approved and adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. A copy of the code is on the Council website at www.colchester.gov.uk or can be obtained from Colchester Borough Council, Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester, CO3 3WG.

This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and meets the requirements of regulations 6(1)(a) and (b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of a statement on internal control.

DELIVERING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The purpose of the governance framework

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled. Which in turn directs the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Council's governance framework has been in place during the year ended 31 March 2020 and up to the date of the approval of the annual accounts.

Elements of the Framework

The framework consists of comprehensive processes that each ensure that the Council complies with the principals of good governance. These include:

- **The Strategic Plan** – which identifies and communicates the Council’s vision of its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users. This is supported by an action plan that is updated annually.
- **The Strategic Risk Register** – which reflects the objectives of the Strategic Plan and identifies the implications for the Council’s governance arrangements.
- **The Constitution** - This is the fundamental basis of the Council’s governance arrangements and includes:
 - Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication.
 - Reviewing and updating procedure rules, financial procedure rules, a scheme of delegation and supporting procedure notes / manuals, which clearly define how decisions are taken.
 - The Policy Framework which includes the documents relating to Corporate Governance including:
 - The Local Code of Corporate Governance.
 - A risk management strategy detailing processes and controls required to manage risks.
 - The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
 - The Ethical Framework which includes documents relating to standards of conduct and good practice which include:
 - A code of conduct which defines the standards of behaviour for all Members.
 - Planning procedures Code of Practice
 - Protocol on Member/Officer Relations
 - Media Protocol
 - Monitoring Officer Protocol
 - Chief Finance Officer Protocol
 - Resources Protocol
 - A whistle blowing policy for receiving and investigating complaints from the public and staff.
 - Gifts and Hospitality Guidance
- **The Chief Finance Officer Protocol** sets out the responsibilities to conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016).
- **The operation of a Governance and Audit Committee** which undertakes the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in CIPFA’s document ‘Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities’. It also acts as the ‘client’ committee scrutinising the performance of the Colchester Commercial (Holdings) Limited and its subsidiary companies.
- **The operation of a Scrutiny Panel** to ensure that the actions of the Cabinet accord with the policies and budget of the Council, monitor the financial performance of the Council, link spending proposals to the Council’s policy priorities and review progress and to review decisions of the Cabinet via the call-in procedure.
- **A performance management system** for all officers that identifies key objectives and development needs.
- **A member training and development programme.**

- **A communications strategy** which establishes clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation.
- **A partnership strategy** that ensures that the quality of the Council's partnerships are improved and that all partnerships, both current and proposed, add value.
- **Treasury management practices and policies**

The post of the Section 151 Officer for Colchester Borough Council was held permanently by the Strategic Finance Manager until February 2019, when they ceased working for the Council. An interim Section 151 Officer has been appropriately appointed by full Council to fill the role, until a suitable permanent replacement can be made. The arrangements in place ensured that the Council's financial management arrangements conformed with the governance requirements of the CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016).

DELIVERING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

Review of effectiveness

The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit Annual Report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates including the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner's Office, Equal Opportunities Commission, Lexcel, Investors In People, the Vehicle Inspectorate, DEFRA, East England Tourist Board and the Office of Surveillance Commissioners.

As well as the annual review, the governance and control frameworks are maintained and reviewed by a series of comprehensive processes throughout the year. These include:

- **A robust Internal Audit function** where the planned work is based on identified key systems and risk areas. The Council's Internal Audit Service arrangements conform to the governance requirements and core responsibilities of the *CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations (2010)*. The services' compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards was independently assessed and verified in November 2016.
- **An embedded reporting system** for both internal and external audit issues that ensures that senior managers and members are fully briefed on key issues, which includes regular reporting to the Governance and Audit Committee.
- **A comprehensive risk management process** that ensures the key risks across the Council, both operational and strategic, are captured and reported to senior officers and Members.
- **The reports of the Chief Financial Officer** to Members and the senior management team including financial assessments of key projects and decisions.
- **Reporting of key performance issues** to the Scrutiny Panel.
- **A comprehensive budget monitoring process** that is reported monthly to senior managers.
- **A partnership register** that records the details of all the partnerships that the Council is involved in.
- **A defined Monitoring Officer role** which sets out responsibility for ensuring all decisions comply with statutory requirements and are lawful.

The significant control issues found during the review are highlighted in the table at the end of the statement.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the Council at the end of the financial year, and rapid changes to systems and processes were required to be able to respond to changes in legislation, development of Coronavirus support services (such as business support grants) and to continue to deliver existing services. It is acknowledged that to be able to respond so rapidly it was not always possible to verify that all control arrangements were embedded in initial processes. It is too early to be able to assess the impact on governance for 2019/20, however the potential future impacts have been identified as a risk for 2020/21, and will be included in audit reviews for the foreseeable future.

Effectiveness of Other Organisations

The Council owns six companies:

- Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) which was created in 2003,
- Colchester Community Stadium Limited (CCSL) created in 2007
- Colchester Commercial (Holdings) Limited (CCHL), and its three subsidiary companies –
 - Colchester Amphora Trading Limited,
 - Colchester Amphora Energy Limited and
 - Colchester Amphora Housing Limited.

It also leads two joint (with other local authorities) services:

- Colchester & Ipswich Museums Service (CIMS)
- North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP)

As these are limited companies there is no requirement for them to produce Governance Statements in this format. However, it is recognised by the Council, that it is essential for these companies to operate effective governance procedures to ensure appropriate and cost-effective service provision and protection of Council assets.

Whilst CBH is an 'arms-length' company it is still necessary for the Council to ensure that it operates effectively to ensure that it provides an effective and economical service to housing tenants and that the Council's asset, the housing stock, is adequately protected. CBH have produced their own annual governance review that has been shared with the Council. There were no significant control weakness identified during the year that are required to be included in this statement.

A review of the management arrangements for CCSL was carried out as part of the preparation of this statement. Whilst CCSL is an 'arms-length' company it is still necessary for the Council to ensure that it operates effectively to ensure that it can make the necessary loan repayments to the Council and that the Council's asset, the stadium, is adequately protected. There were no significant control weakness identified during the year that are required to be included in this statement.

The CCHL group was created to enable a more commercial approach to be taken to delivering revenue generating Council services and to develop innovative options for new services in the future, such as a heat exchange system for the Borough. Whilst the CCHL group are operating in a commercial environment, and therefore can take a different approach to service delivery, they are still delivering services on the Council's behalf.

Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that it operates effectively to deliver the best possible outcomes for the Council. The activities of CCHL are monitored through the Council's Internal Audit programme and reported to the Council's Governance and Audit Committee. There were no significant control weaknesses, specific to CCHL, during 2019/20, that need to be included in this statement.

The Council is the lead partner in the Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service. Due to the nature of the arrangement, the joint museum service conducts its own annual governance review which includes an assessment of internal control. Therefore, it is not intended to include any details relating to this service within this statement.

The North Essex Parking Partnership was created on 1 April 2011, with the Council as the lead partner. The partnership conducts its own annual governance review which includes an assessment of internal control. Therefore, it is not intended to include any details relating to the service within this statement.

The Council has a comprehensive partnership strategy and maintains a detailed register of the partnerships that it participates in. The strategy defines what a partnership is and details the governance arrangements that should be in place for all partnerships, both present and new. It also provides a mechanism for improving the effectiveness of the partnerships.

Internal Audit Opinion

From the work undertaken in 2019/20, Internal Audit has provided satisfactory assurance that the system of internal control that has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2020 accords with proper practice. This is excepting any details of significant internal control issues as documented hereafter. It is also the opinion of Internal Audit that the Council's corporate governance framework complies with the best practice guidance on corporate governance issued by CIPFA/SOLACE.

Review of Actions from 2018/19 Statement

There were four actions included in the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19:

- Data Protection
- Project Management
- Long Term Decision Making
- Finance System

Various processes have been implemented to strengthen the protection of personal data and these continue to be embedded and tested.

New governance arrangements for project management were established to oversee all activity and provide delivery assurance along with a programme management system developed using Power BI and SharePoint with extensive training being delivered across the organisation.

New Strategic Priorities (NSPs) have been developed through engagement with Cabinet, other Members and SMT Managers. The NSPs agreed in November 2019 include provision for revenue and capital priorities, and these priorities have been used as the basis for the revised Strategic Plan and long term decision making.

The new web-based version of the Finance software has now been implemented and rolled out across the organisation. This has resolved the issues identified during last year's review.

Conclusion & Significant Governance Issues

Overall the control arrangements in place during the 2019/20 financial year have been effective and were appropriate. However, the review has identified some areas where actions are required to ensure that the Council continues to provide appropriate and cost-effective services. The issues and action plans are shown in the table below. These will be monitored and reviewed via the Internal Audit review process during 2020/21

No.	Issue	Action
1.	<u>Procurement / Purchasing</u> The internal audit of the procurement process identified several areas for improvement, and it was recommended that a strategic review of the procurement process is undertaken.	A comprehensive framework of actions will be delivered during 2020/21, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of risks and opportunities for collaborative working and joint procurement.• Development of a training framework• Benchmarking with other authorities• Aligning the strategy with the LGA National Procurement Strategy 2018.• Regular review of cumulative expenditure• Development of a SharePoint site with a refreshed contracts register and document capture including quotation records.
2.	<u>IT- Social Media</u> The increasing use of social media to promote Council business creates additional opportunities for information and data to become corrupted or inappropriately accessed. Therefore, the internal audit review highlighted further controls that should be implemented to increase data security.	The following controls will be implemented in 2020/21: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening of password controls.• Completion of a business needs assessment for new social media platforms.• Use of external monitoring tools to ensure appropriate use of accounts.• Inclusion of social media in the Information Security Policy.• Regular training of officers responsible for the social media accounts.
3.	<u>Payment Controls</u> The creditors function is responsible for arranging the payment for goods and services throughout the Council. The Internal Audit review identified some areas where the system controls needed strengthening.	The following additional controls will be implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of ability to amend payment files after authorisation.• Ensuring officers only have one level of authorisation.• Strengthening of password controls.• Further segregation of duties for authorisation of payment runs.

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework, by the Governance and Audit Committee, and we propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed:

.....
Leader of the Council

.....
Chief Executive

on behalf of Colchester Borough Council

DRAFT
Colchester Borough Council
Annual Governance Statement – Action Plan for 2020/21

Significant Internal Control Issues – Relating to 2019/20 Financial Year

No.	Issue	Action	Due Date	Responsible Officer	How this Issue was Identified
1	<p><u>Procurement / Purchasing</u> The internal audit of the procurement process identified several areas for improvement. It was recommended that a strategic review of the procurement process is undertaken that includes risks and opportunities for collaborative working and joint procurement, assessing training needs, benchmarking with other authorities and ensuring the strategy complies with LGA National Procurement Strategy 2018. Management should ensure that cumulative expenditure is reviewed regularly and that the contracts register is updated across the organisation. The procurement SharePoint site should be developed to ensure that is captures all documentation relating to procurement, including evidence of quotation decisions.</p>	<p>All of the recommendations were accepted, and several have already been actioned. The progress will be followed up by Internal Audit during 2020/21.</p>	<p>31 October 2020</p>	<p>Assistant Director of Corporate & Improvement Services</p>	<p>Internal Audit process.</p>

No.	Issue	Action	Due Date	Responsible Officer	How this Issue was Identified
2	<u>IT- Social Media</u> The increasing use of social media to promote Council business creates additional opportunities for information and data to become corrupted or inappropriately accessed. Therefore, the internal audit review highlighted further controls that should be implemented to increase data security. These included the strengthening of password controls, completion of a business needs assessment for new social media platforms, use of external monitoring tools to ensure appropriate use of accounts, inclusion of social media in the Information Security Policy and regular training of officers responsible for the social media accounts.	All of the recommendations were accepted, and several have already been actioned. The progress will be followed up by Internal Audit during 2020/21.	31 October 2020	Assistant Director of Corporate & Improvement Services	Internal audit process
3.	<u>Payment Controls</u> During the course of the Internal Audit review of the payment system there were some control improvements identified. These included reviewing how payment files could be amended after authorisation, ensuring officers only had one level of authorisation, strengthening password controls and ensuring two officer authorisations to process payment runs.	All of the recommendations were accepted, and several have already been actioned. The progress will be followed up by Internal Audit during 2020/21.	30 June 2020	Assistant Director Customers	Internal audit process



Governance and Audit Committee

Item
7

28 July 2020

Report of	Monitoring Officer	Author	Andrew Weavers ☎ 282213
Title	Local Government Association Consultation on Draft Model Member Code of Conduct		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report informs the Committee of the consultation by the Local Government Association on its draft Model Member Code of Conduct.

2. Recommended Decisions

- 2.1 To review the Local Government Association's consultation on its draft Member Code of Conduct and make any comments they wish to inform a response.
- 2.2 That the Monitoring Officer finalises the Council's response in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokespersons.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council adopted the Members' Code of Conduct in July 2012 and it forms part of the Constitution. Most Essex local authorities were covered by a single, jointly agreed Code of Conduct which was prepared by the Public Law Partnership with the aim of ensuring that councillors who were members of multiple authorities within the county were covered by a single code, providing clarity and consistency. The same Members' Code of Conduct was adopted by the majority of the parish councils in the Borough.
- 3.2 In early 2019 the Committee on Standards in Public Life published a report on standards in local government. They made a number of recommendations to local authorities, to the Local Government Association (LGA) and to central government. Central government has not yet responded to the recommendations so we do not yet know how it will react. This Committee agreed a response to that report.
- 3.3 The key recommendation to the LGA was that it should produce a model code for local authorities to consider adopting. At present the joint code originally produced in 2012 has been amended locally by some authorities to reflect their own circumstances over the years and consequently there is no longer a common code in the county. The Council via this Committee has kept our code under review but has not changed the wording.
- 3.4 Our starting point should therefore be that we would welcome the introduction of a model national code, in the hope that all Essex authorities will adopt it and that there would be consistency across the county.
- 3.5 If the LGA introduces a model code there is likely to be an increased expectation that authorities will use the national code, but there is no guarantee that this will happen. Early conversations with other Essex local authorities indicate that a significant number of

authorities are likely to adopt the LGA code, but this is of course dependent on the final content of the code and the views of those authorities at the time.

- 3.6 In June 2020 the LGA published a consultation draft of the code with a closing date of 17 August 2020. The LGA have published an on-line response questionnaire. The LGA documents can be accessed here:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/code-conduct-consultation-2020>

- 3.7 The draft code is longer than our current code because as well as including the “rules” there is a commentary. It appears from the consultation questionnaire, which asks “*Is it sufficiently clear which parts of the Model Code are legal requirements, which are obligations, and which are guidance?*” that the commentary is intended to be guidance, though the suggested answer to that question is “no”, although it would be simple to amend the draft to make it clear.
- 3.8 The draft code also has two appendices, one of which reproduces the “Nolan” principles (which are only a guide to interpretation) and another which sets out the rules relating to registration and declaration of interests.
- 3.9 Both our code and the draft LGA code have their roots in the former mandatory national code of conduct created by the Local Government Act 2000. This means that broadly the codes are similar but, as would be expected, there are a number of differences. The following table highlights the differences between our current code and compares it to the draft LGA Code, with a commentary.

Current CBC Code	Draft LGA Code	Commentary
Requirement to treat others with respect	Requirement to treat other members and the public with civility but treating employees, partners and volunteers with civility and respect to their role. Expanded wording makes it clear that members should not make unreasonable attack.	It is difficult to see why a two tier approach is appropriate. The current CBC wording derives from the old national code and has not caused difficulties in practice.
Requirement to uphold the law	Not included in draft LGA code.	The requirement to uphold the law is a useful reminder if a member were to seek to persuade officers to do something unlawful.
Requirement not do anything that would cause the Authority to breach any of the equality enactments	Not included in draft LGA code.	This is a useful specific clause and it would be helpful to include it.
Disclosure of information	Under LGA model code it would be necessary to demonstrate that a member believed information to be confidential.	It is not helpful to have to prove that a member believed something to be confidential, since a member can argue that they believed something was not confidential when it was clearly marked as such. The CBC wording is more detailed and based on the previous national code. It may be better to say that it is a breach to disclose believed that the Council if the Councillor knew or ought to have known

Current CBC Code	Draft LGA Code	Commentary
	<i>Includes provision for not bringing role as councillor or council into disrepute</i>	<i>Not currently in CBC code but would welcome its inclusion</i>
Not conferring an advantage or disadvantage on someone (including yourself)	Similar wording. Commentary says: Your position as a Member of the council provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities and privileges. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further private interests.	Some members may feel that this prevents them using skills and experience in other walks of life. That is unlikely to be what these words are intended to mean, but it is suggested that these are not included
When using CBC resources comply with our requirements and not use them improperly	There is a requirement not to misuse council resources. Limited commentary as to what this means and no requirement to comply with CBC requirements.	Draft does not provide for enforcement of any internal rules about resources. It would be helpful if this could be expanded.
Requirement to have regard to statutory publicity code	Not included.	This provision is not often relied upon, but it is a useful for this to have personal consequences for a councillor if they seek to abuse the statutory code and it would be preferable if the LGA code could include it.
Requirement to register gifts and hospitality of over £50	Included. Additional requirement not to accept significant gifts or hospitality from people who may apply to council for any permission licence or other significant advantage	One of the consultation questions is whether the £25 limit should change. It is not clear whether the requirement to refuse hospitality is helpful – term “significant advantage” is unclear - does it include current potential contractors and partner organisations?
Code interests (as opposed to disclosable pecuniary interests) are: <u>Pecuniary interests:</u> in any business of the Authority where it relates to or is likely to affect: (a) any person or body who employs or has appointed you; (b) any contract for goods, services or works made between the Authority and you or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of	Other registerable interests are only: (i) Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the council; (ii) Any body: (a) exercising functions of a public nature; (b) directed to charitable purposes; or	Under the draft, tenders and contracts and contracts with subsidiaries are not required to be registered. However, members would still have to register current contracts as a disclosable pecuniary interest.

<p>which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specific in paragraph 6.2.(g) which has been fully discharged within the last 12 months;</p> <p><u>Pecuniary Interests</u></p> <p>in any business of the Authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:</p> <p>(a) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Authority;</p> <p>(b) any body –</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) exercising functions of a public nature;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(ii) directed to charitable purposes; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union); of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;</p> <p>(c) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50;</p> <p>(d) a decision in relation to that business which might reasonably be regarded as affecting your wellbeing or the wellbeing of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) (in the case of authorities with electoral divisions or wards) other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral division or ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision; or</p>	<p>(c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)</p> <p>of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.</p> <p>Not included</p> <p>Someone with an “other” interest can only exercise same rights as member of public i.e. they can only speak where the public can take part and they cannot vote.</p>	<p>This is a stricter test than the CBC code, the interest could be trivial and could deprive a member of a vote. Unclear whether it is lawful to deprive a member of a vote if they are allowed to be in the room.</p>
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(ii) (in all other cases) other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the Authority's area.		
Monitoring Officer can give dispensations for interests	Unclear whether dispensations allowed for other interests	Power to grant dispensations for "other" interests must be included in the draft.

- 3.10 The LGA consultation also contains a suggested internal resolution procedure to address conduct that is in breach of the Member Code of Conduct. The Council is already required by law to have one in place under its Localism Act Arrangements which are kept under annual review by this Committee. The suggestions do not include binding sanctions which is something that the Committee on Standards in Public Life had included in their consultation and whether they should be introduced for serious breaches of the Code. In our response we stated that sanctions should be introduced including the ability to suspend in specified circumstances, whilst acknowledging that this would require a change in the law.
- 3.11 The closing date for receipt of comments by the LGA is 17 August 2020 and all councillors are encouraged to submit their own individual responses. It is suggested that the Monitoring Officer collates a response to the questionnaire following its consideration of the paper on behalf of the Committee, in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokespersons.

4. Strategic Plan References

- 4.1 The manner in which the Council governs its business is an underpinning mechanism in the Council's Strategic Plan aims to set out the direction and future potential for our Borough.

5. Financial, Publicity, Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, Consultation, Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management, Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 5.1 None identified.

6. List of Background papers/Appendices:

Appendix 1 CBC code

[MembersCodeofConduct.pdf](#)

Appendix 2 Draft LGA Code (including appendices)

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LGA%20Model%20Member%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

Appendix 3 - LGA consultation questionnaire (to be completed online:)

https://research.local.gov.uk/jfe/form/SV_blupYNXmiJ0xECV

28 July 2020

Report of	Assistant Director of Corporate & Improvement Services	Author	Hayley McGrath 508902
Title	Initial summary of Digital Council Meetings		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the meeting on 23 June 2020 the committee requested a brief summary of the implementation of virtual committee meetings, that were required as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This paper gives a summary overview of the work and meetings that have taken place so far, and invites Councillors, and officers, to provide their views to help inform a detailed review of digital meetings, which will be reported to the committee later in the year.

2.0 Recommended Decisions

- 2.1 To consider and note the summary of virtual meetings undertaken by Colchester Borough Council since June 2020.
- 2.2 To note the future review of digital meetings.

3.0 Reasons for Recommended Decisions

- 3.1 The process for digital meetings is still being refined. Therefore, this report is for information only and further work will be undertaken to provide a more comprehensive review of digital meetings and any necessary decisions that may be required.

4.0 Alternative Options

- 4.1 As the report is for consideration and noting there are no alternative options.

5.0 Summary of Work Undertaken

- 5.1 The government decision in March 2020 to put 'lockdown' restrictions in place meant that it was not possible to have face-to-face committee meetings and Council business was effectively put on hold whilst an alternative solution could be found.
- 5.2 Whilst the Coronavirus legislation allowed for annual meetings to be postponed until 2021, it was necessary to ensure that decision making could be resumed as soon as possible.
- 5.3 Whilst the Council had been investigating digital meetings previously, there had been no decision on digital solutions or processes. Therefore, a suitable video conferencing system had to be implemented prior to the decision-making process resuming at the beginning of June. A process for allowing members of the public to still have their say was also implemented.

- 5.4 The Council was not using any video conferencing systems prior to the pandemic and as a result there was a very short time frame to identify a suitable system, roll it out to all users, produce user guides and train all participants on how to conduct meetings, as well as ensure that they all had suitable equipment to allow them to participate in meetings.
- 5.5 Since 01 June a full 'cycle' of committee meetings has taken place with every member now having taken part in at least one meeting. The meetings are live streamed on YouTube and are available for download. The full list of meetings, and the on-line viewing numbers are shown below:

Meeting	Date	Views
Scrutiny	01/06/2020	292 views
Cabinet	03/06/2020	462 views
Licensing	10/06/2020	138 views
Policy and Public Initiatives Panel	17/06/2020	153 views
Planning	18/06/2020	429 views
Governance and Audit	23/06/2020	161 views
North Essex Parking Partnership	25/06/2020	100 views
Licensing Sub-Committee	01/07/2020	219 views
Scrutiny	07/07/2020	292 views
Cabinet	08/07/2020	340 views
Planning	09/07/2020	125 views
Local Plan	14/07/2020	365 views
Council	15/07/2020	329 views

- 5.6 The feedback from members, officers and the public has generally been very good. Whilst there is a natural desire to have face to face meetings all participants are getting used to the new skills of digital meetings. Democratic Services have not received any specific complaints or concerns about the meetings.
- 5.7 Some of the benefits of the digital meetings have included the ability of members to participate from wherever they are based, no paper agendas for any meeting and greater accessibility for the public - one of the public speakers for the Licensing Sub-committee joined from an overseas location and stated that she would not have been able to participate previously as she could not attend in person. The number of online views for each committee is considerably more than the previous audio streaming.
- 5.8 There have been some connection issues as members get used to the new systems and these have predominantly about logging on and use of microphones and videos. There is a guide to meeting etiquette, and on the whole participants are following it.
- 5.9 Digital meetings do require more officer support than physical meetings, especially at the start of each meeting. Currently at least two Democratic Officers and an IT support officer will be online to assist members with logging on, changing the names that are displayed, checking video and audio connections and signalling if a participant has dropped out, which may require a meeting to be put on hold until they can reconnect.

6.0 Future Review of Digital Meetings

- 6.1 Currently there has been no decision about a timescale for physical meetings to be restarted and risk assessments are being undertaken to set out proposals for how limited meetings may be able to take place, in line with government regulations.

- 6.2 Whilst there have been no significant issues with regards to the digital meetings that have taken place, a full analysis needs to be undertaken to review the success and future options for digital meetings.
- 6.3 Therefore further work will be undertaken to review the full impact of digital meetings and set out recommendations for future actions, to ensure that there is a full and robust decision-making process whilst at the same time allowing for any social distancing regulations.
- 6.4 To help inform the review process all members will be invited to share their experiences of digital meetings and any suggestions they may have. A final report will be submitted to this committee later in the year.

7.0 Standard References

- 7.1 There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; consultation or publicity considerations or financial; community safety; health and safety; risk management or environmental and sustainability implications.

Governance and Audit Committee

Item
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28 July 2020

Report of	Assistant Director Corporate and Improvement Services	Author	Matthew Evans ☎ ext. 8006
Title	Work Programme 2020-2021		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current Work Programme 2020-2021 for the Governance and Audit Committee. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the Work Programme for 2020-2021.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Work Programme of this Committee is kept under review throughout the municipal year to ensure that business is progressed and Members have the opportunity to review upcoming agenda items.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 This function forms part of the Committee's Terms of Reference and, as such, no alternative options are presented.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Governance and Audit Committee deals with the approval of the Council's Statement of Accounts, audit, other miscellaneous regulatory matters and standards.
- 5.2 The Committee's Work Programme will evolve as the Municipal Year progresses and items of business are commenced and concluded. At each meeting the opportunity is taken for the Work Programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances.

6. Standard References

- 6.1 There are no particular references to publicity or consultation considerations; or financial; equality, diversity and human rights; community safety; health and safety, environmental and sustainability implications or risk management implications.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 Governance is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan's priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the four themes of growth, responsibility, opportunity and wellbeing.
- 7.2 The Council recognises that effective local government relies on establishing and maintaining the public's confidence, and that setting high standards of self-governance provides a clear and demonstrable lead. Effective governance underpins the implementation and application of all aspects of the Council's work.

WORK PROGRAMME 2020-21

Governance and Audit Committee
Meeting date / Agenda items -
Governance and Audit Committee - 23 June 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Draft Annual Statement of Accounts 2019/20202. Year End Internal Audit Assurance Report 2019/20203. Review of the Governance Framework and Draft Annual Governance Statement4. CCHL – Annual report
Governance and Audit Committee - 28 July 2020
Governance and Audit Committee briefing followed by the following items -
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review of Governance Framework and Draft Annual Governance Statement2. LGA Consultation on a Model Code of Conduct for Councillors3. Review of digital meetings following Covid-19

Governance and Audit Committee - 8 September 2020

1. Audited Statement of Accounts 2019/2020 and Annual Audit letter
2. Colchester Borough Homes Annual Report and Governance Statement
3. Financial Monitoring Report – April to June 2020
4. Capital Expenditure Monitor 2020/2021
5. Treasury Management Report 2019-20
6. 2019/2020 Year End Review of Risk Management

Governance and Audit Committee - 20 October 2020

1. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review 2019/2020
2. Health and Safety Policy and Annual Report
3. Equality and Safeguarding Annual Update
4. Annual Audit Letter 2019/2020

Governance and Audit Committee – 24 November 2020

1. Review of the Council's Ethical Governance Policies
2. Annual Review of the Members' Code of Conduct and the Council's Localism Act "Arrangements"
3. Review of Local Code of Corporate Governance
4. Review of Member/Officer Protocol
5. Gifts and Hospitality – Review of Guidance for Councillors and Policy for Employees
6. Treasury Management – Half Yearly Update
7. Annual Review of Business Continuity

Governance and Audit Committee - 19 January 2021

1. Interim Review of the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan
2. Risk Management Progress Report
3. Mid-Year Internal Audit Assurance Report 2020/2021
4. CCHL Half-Year Performance Report
5. Annual Review of the Council's Companies' Business Plans

Governance and Audit Committee - **23 March 2021**

1. External Audit Plan for year ending 31 March 2021 and Certification of Claims and Returns – Annual Report 2019/2020
2. Financial Monitoring Report
3. Capital Expenditure Monitor 2020/2021
4. Internal Audit Plan 2021/2022