

Contact Officer: Leigh Webb

## KIRKLEES COUNCIL

### CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

**Friday 6 March 2020**

Present: Councillor Will Simpson (Chair)  
Councillor Paola Antonia Davies  
Councillor Susan Lee -Richards  
Councillor Kath Pinnock  
Councillor Steve Hall

Councillor E Smaje - Chair Overview and Scrutiny  
Management Committee (Ex-officio)

Apologies: Councillor John Taylor

**1 Membership of the Committee**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor John Taylor

**2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

**3 Interests**

No interests were declared.

**4 Admission of the Public**

It was noted that all items would be considered in public

**5 Deputations/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

**6 Public Question Time**

No questions were asked.

**7 Members Allowances Independent Review Panel (MAIRP) 2020/21**

The Committee gave consideration to a report which set out the recommendations of the Members Allowances Independent Review Panel for the 2020/2021 municipal year.

The report advised that the Panel had met on 10 January 2020 and had agreed the following recommendations:

- (i) The current Basic Allowance be increased in line with the amount awarded to Kirklees Council officers (% yet to be agreed as national negotiations are ongoing) with effect from 1 April 2020.
- (ii) All Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) be increased in line with the amount awarded to Kirklees Council officers (% yet to be agreed as national negotiations are ongoing) with effect from 1 April 2020.
- (iii) Should the amount awarded to Kirklees Council officers not be agreed by 1 April 2020, any increase should be backdated to this date.

The draft Members' Allowances Scheme for 2020/21 which takes account of the recommendations set out above, was appended to the report.

The Committee gave consideration to the recommendations of the Panel and agreed that they be endorsed and submitted to Council with a recommendation of approval.

**RESOLVED -**

- 1) That the recommendations of the Members Allowances Independent Review Panel (Appendix A) be received and noted.
- 2) That the report be submitted to the meeting of Council on 18 March 2020 with a recommendation that the Members Allowances Scheme 2020/2021 (Appendix B) be approved and adopted with effect from 1 April 2020.

**8**

**Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 – Quarter 3 Action Plan Update**

The Committee received a report outlining progress in respect of significant governance issues in the Action Plan which had been devised in response to the 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. The Statement is a statutory requirement and accompanies the Statement of Accounts in order to provide assurance about the governance and internal control environment in which they have been compiled and to which they relate.

With regard to 2018/19, it was reported that the Statement contained 17 Issues reflecting a focus on self-awareness prior to the Corporate Peer Review Challenge last year. Significant progress was reported in the following areas:

- Risk Management,
- Financial Planning & Budgeting,
- Procurement Rule Compliance
- Challenge in Governance Arrangements
- Local Government Ethical Standards
- SAP Access

It was explained that a number of issues were not scheduled to be completed before the end of March and a final assessment of the extent of progress with each issue will be made at year end at which time reflection will determine whether or not to carry forward the Issues into the 2019/20 Statement if they remain "Significant".

During discussion of this item, Committee Members highlighted the large number of governance issues within the action plan and suggested a reduction to focus on key issues. With regard to the waste strategy an undertaking was given to provide more detail on the issue within the next submitted report.

**RESOLVED-** That this Committee notes the progress at Quarter 3.

## **9 External Audit Update**

The Committee considered the audit findings report from external auditor, Grant Thornton, providing observations arising from the audit. The report concluded that it was anticipated that an unqualified audit opinion would be issued subject to the completion of the following outstanding tasks: completion of quality review procedures; review of final set of financial statements; and the receipt of the management letter of representation.

With regard to value for money, the report concluded that Grant Thornton were satisfied that the Council had proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

It was reported that audit fees for 2018-19, which are subject to approval by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd, amounted to £137,721.

Further to Minute 10 of the last meeting of this Committee, it was reported that a meeting had been arranged for 2 April to enable Paul Dossett, National Partner at Grant Thornton, to address Committee Members in relation to the delay in signing off the Council's Statement of Accounts.

**RESOLVED** - That the update be noted.

## **10 Annual Review of Code of Corporate Governance**

The Committee received a report on the review of undertaken by the Monitoring Officer on the Code of Corporate Governance. The Kirklees Code was last reviewed in 2017 following the publication of fresh guidance from CIPFA and SOLACE in 2016. It was reported that these guidelines are still current and as a result of this there have been no major revisions to the Kirklees Code.

A revised code was submitted to the Committee which highlighted some formatting changes and the inclusion of reference to Kirklees strategic objectives.

During consideration of this item, further revisions were suggested.

**RESOLVED** - That the revised Code of Corporate Governance, as set out in the report, be adopted subject to the inclusion of the following amendments:

Removal of the word 'also' in para 3; reference to and a link to the 'Corporate Plan'

Addition of the word 'above' before the word outcomes to clarify that it refers to the outcomes previously mentioned.