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# Update Report – Review of the Effectiveness of the Governance and Ethics Committee

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Governance and Ethics Committee
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	19 April 2021
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Howard Woollaston
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Report Author:</b>	Julie Gillhespey
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	GE4032

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

At the Governance and Ethics Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020, a paper was presented which set out an Action Plan to address the recommendations made in the Internal Audit report covering the review of the effectiveness of the Governance and Ethics Committee. Members requested some minor amendments and further detail for some aspects of the Action Plan, this report provides the further details and amended documents.

## 2 Recommendation

That members note the contents of the audit report/revised appendices.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Financial:</b>	None
<b>Human Resource:</b>	None
<b>Legal:</b>	None
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None

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<b>Property:</b>	None			
<b>Policy:</b>	None			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Health Impact:</b>		X		
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>		X		
<b>Core Business:</b>		X		

<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	Members of the Finance and Governance Officer Group			

## 4 Executive Summary

At the Governance and Ethics Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020, a paper was presented which set out an Action Plan to address the recommendations made in the Internal Audit report covering the review of the effectiveness of the Governance and Ethics (G&E) Committee. Members requested some minor amendments and further detail for some aspects of the Action Plan, this report provides the further details and amended documents.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction/Background

- 5.1 During 2018 an external assessment was carried out of the effectiveness of the Council’s Internal Audit Service, the resulting report included a suggestion that Internal Audit should consider undertaking a review of the remit and effectiveness of the Council’s G&E Committee.
- 5.2 A review was therefore undertaken in 2019, and a draft report of the findings was presented to the G&E Committee in April 2020, at which time there was agreement to all of the recommendations included in the report, and that the Finance and Governance Officer Group would draft an Action Plan to be presented to G&E at a later date.
- 5.3 The Action Plan was presented to Committee in November 2020, at which time there were a number of observations/queries raised by members, these are listed below together with the action taken to respond/resolve the query:-
  - (a) The Action Plan did not included timeframes for when the actions were to be completed. This has now been resolved, the document has been revised to include a progress update and timeframes for outstanding actions (Highlighted in bold on Appendix A).
  - (b) With regards to the revised Terms of Reference for the Committee (Appendix B), the content did not refer to substitutes, this has been amended (page 9 section 4). A query was raised regarding the phraseology of point 12, this has been revised, and a further review identified that point 14 was currently not applicable so it has been deleted.
  - (c) Members were concerned about the increased content of the proposed Terms of Reference and queried how much of an impact this would have on their role. The Audit Manager responded to say that the revised content was mainly to provide greater detail of the areas of current responsibility, there were only a couple of new areas of responsibility. Members asked for detail as to the frequency of each

activity for context. (See Appendix B, a column has been added to provide detail of the frequency of each activity).

- (d) A revised training programme had been compiled for committee members (only covering the audit committee functions element of the Committee’s role). This included more comprehensive coverage of each of the functions. Members queried the frequency of undertaking the expanded training programme. The recommendation is that all new members should complete the full training programme during their first year after appointment to the Committee. The courses will be run each year for new members, and for those members who may choose to attend as a refresher. The suggestion is that there is a mandatory refresh every four years, unless there are significant changes to any of the functions which require more timely updated training to be given. The revised training programme is attached as Appendix C as an aide memoire of the revised content and timeframes.

### Proposals

- Members note the additional information that has been provided/revisions to the appendices in response to the queries previously raised by the Committee (as set out in section 5.3).

## 6 Other options considered

Not applicable, this report provides responses to queries raised by members on a report that was previously presented to Committee in November 2020.

## 7 Conclusion

This report provides information/context to queries raised by members when presented with the Action Plan and other supporting documents, which set out the recommended approach to meeting the recommendations made as a result of the review of the Effectiveness of the Governance and Ethics Committee.

## 8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Action Plan with Timeframes
- 8.2 Appendix B – Terms of Reference including Frequency of Activity
- 8.3 Appendix C – Training Programme

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### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

## Update Report – Review of the Effectiveness of the Governance and Ethics Committee

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- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

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