

THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023/24

Council	28 March 2024
Report Author	Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet member for Finance
Status	For Information
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Ward:	Thanet wide

Executive Summary:

The annual report summarises the achievements of the Governance and Audit Committee against its terms of reference for the 2023-24 financial year and details the impact that it has made on the overall system of internal control in operation for that period.

Recommendation(s):

That members note the report.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

The committee plays a key role in overseeing the authority's financial administration, including the approval of the Council's annual statement of accounts and considering the adequacy of its control environment and approach to risk management.

Legal

The Council is meeting best practice by having in place a Governance and Audit Committee, as this is not a mandatory or statutory function. In adopting the CIPFA guidance for the terms of reference for the Committee the Council is meeting the standards set out for the public sector.

Corporate

Under its Local Code of Corporate Governance the Council is committed to comply with requirements for the independent review of the financial and operational reporting processes, through the external audit and inspection processes, and satisfactory arrangements for internal audit. The functions of the Governance and Audit Committee

contribute to the overall internal control environment for the Council and feed into the Annual Governance Statement process

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

There no equity and equalities issues arising directly from this report but the Council needs to retain a strong focus and understanding on issues of diversity amongst the local community and ensure service delivery matches these.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- To create a thriving place

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The purpose of the Council's Governance and Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent review of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.

1.2 To comply with best practice the Committee considers annually how it has met its terms of reference and how it has impacted on the internal control environment. The purpose of this report is to consider the self-assessment that has been undertaken and summarise any improvement opportunities for the forthcoming year.

2.0 Background

2.1 The annual report attached at Annex 1 summarises the work of the Committee for the year and concludes that it has received clear, concise and relevant information, training on topics specific to the business of the Committee, and has done all that it can to meet the aims and objectives for the Committee in the best way that it can.

Contact Officer: Ingrid Brown, Head of Legal and Democracy & Monitoring Officer
Reporting to: Colin Carmichael, Interim Chief Executive

Annex List

Annex 1: Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24

Background Papers

None

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell, Director of Corporate Services

Legal: Ingrid Brown, Head of Legal and Democracy & Monitoring Officer