

## PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held remotely via MS Teams Live, at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 24 March 2021, when the following Members were present:-

Malcolm Thomas (Mayor)

Tony Anderson

Mandy Bannon

Phillip Black

Dave Brookes

Keith Budden

Darren Clifford

Roger Dennison

Adrian Duggan

Jason Firth

Andrew Gardiner

Mike Greenall

Mel Guilding

Janice Hanson

Tricia Heath

Mandy King

Sarah Knight

Cary Matthews

Jack O'Dwyer-Henry

Faye Penny

Robert Redfern

Oliver Robinson

Paul Stubbins

Katie Whearty

Anne Whitehead

John Wild

Peter Yates

Joan Jackson (Deputy Mayor)

Paul Anderton

Stephie Barber

Victoria Boyd-Power

Abbott Bryning

Roger Cleet

Tim Dant

Gina Dowding

Merv Evans

Kevin Frea

Jake Goodwin

June Greenwell

Tim Hamilton-Cox

Colin Hartley

Caroline Jackson

Geoff Knight

Erica Lewis

Abi Mills

Jean Parr

Joyce Pritchard

John Reynolds

Alistair Sinclair

Sandra Thornberry

David Whitaker

David Whitworth

Jason Wood

Joanna Young

**124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received at this point from Councillors Alan Biddulph, Debbie Jenkins and Stuart Scothern. Apologies were received later in the meeting from Councillor Richard Austen-Baker, who was unable to attend due to technology issues.

**125 MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor Wood, seconded by Councillor Redfern and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 be accepted as a correct record.

It was noted that the minutes would be signed by the Mayor when the minute book was available.

**126 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members advised of the following interests at this stage:

Councillor Heath declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in relation to Item 12, the motion on notice regarding housing. (Minute 135 refers.)

Councillor Lewis declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 13, Local Government Reform Consultation as a Member of the County Council. (Minute 136 refers.)

Councillor Gardiner declared interests in two items. He declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 13, Local Government Reform Consultation as a Member of the County Council and also a DPI in relation to Item 12, the Housing motion on notice, in view of his employment with an Estate Agency.

Councillor Matthews declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 11, the Right to Food motion on notice (minute 132 refers), and also a DPI in relation to Item 12, the Housing motion on notice.

Councillor Dowding declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 13, Local Government Reform Consultation as a Member of the County Council.

Councillor Parr declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 13, Local Government Reform Consultation as a Member of the County Council.

Councillor Sinclair and Councillor Wood each declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 12, the Housing motion on notice, in view of their membership of ACORN Tenants Union.

Councillor Penny declared two 'other interests' (non-DPI). The first related to Item 11, her motion on notice regarding the Right to Food, and was in view of her volunteer status with Egg Cup Food Bank; the second declaration related to Item 12, the Housing motion on notice, in view of her membership of ACORN Tenants Union.

Councillors Whitaker, Frea, O'Dwyer-Henry and Robinson then each declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 12, the Housing motion on notice, in view of their membership of ACORN Tenants Union.

Councillor Dennison declared DPI in relation to Item 12, the Housing motion on notice.

Councillor Goodwin declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 11, the motion on notice regarding the Right to Food.

Councillor Caroline Jackson declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 11, the motion on notice regarding the Right to Food as she helped out with a food group.

Councillor Whearty declared an 'other interest' (non-DPI) in relation to Item 12, the Housing motion on notice, in view of her membership of ACORN Tenants Union.

## **127 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor announced that, due to the resignation of Councillor Carrington, there would be a by-election held for Bulk Ward of the City Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021, as well as the by-election for Kellet Ward which had been delayed until May due to COVID 19 restrictions. Both of those by-elections would run alongside the scheduled elections for Lancashire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.

He then informed Members of his intention to move Item 11 forward, explaining that he would take an address about food poverty immediately before the Right to Food motion on notice, which was item 11 on the agenda. The address and Item 11 would be taken after item 8, and before item 9, the Leader's report.

## **128 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11**

The Mayor advised that no questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 11.

## **129 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES**

The Mayor informed Councillors that two members of the public had registered to speak, in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Petition Scheme and Council Procedure Rule 13. Mrs Barbara Walker would be presenting a petition in opposition to Bailrigg Garden Village and giving a speech in support of the petition (minute 130 refers).

Mr Dusty Thomas would also be addressing Council later in the meeting, and this would be in relation to Item 11 on the agenda, the motion on notice regarding Right to Food (minute 132 refers).

## **130 PETITION AND ADDRESS - BAILRIGG GARDEN VILLAGE**

Mrs Barbara Walker presented a petition and addressed Council in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Petition Scheme and Council Procedure Rule 13.

The petition read as follows:

*"We the undersigned petition the council to withdraw the consultation on Bailrigg Garden Village Masterplan currently being undertaken by JPT Architects and to put in place a consultation process which properly addresses the objections of local residents.*

*Local residents and local organisations submitted an extensive range of objections to the Lancaster Local Plan and Bailrigg Garden Village, as it was being drafted, from between*

2017 and 2019.

*These objections were repeated at the 2019 public hearings conducted by the Planning Inspector and additionally, presentations were made to Council meetings in December 2017 and July 2020.*

*Residents have received no response to these objections which have, in effect, been ignored. In those circumstances JTP's intention to complete their masterplan by March 2021 cannot provide adequate time for proper considerations of residents' views.*

*The local residents of Galgate, Scotforth and Hala and surrounding areas deserve to be listened to due to a number of reasons and issues, including flooding, air quality, a lack of infrastructure being published and protecting the local environment including bluebell wood that is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, including protected animals like otters that have been seen along the canal.*

*The technicalities of arranging such a consultation have not been adequately met by JTP and residents wishing to express their views, found the electronic platform provided to be inadequate. Additionally, whole sections of residents did not receive the JTP consultation leaflet and therefore were unfairly excluded from the process. Additionally, problems were noted with the email provided. This combined with a ridiculously short deadline has meant that the consultation procedure has fallen short of its role in providing local residents with an opportunity to comment in a constructive and representative way.*

*We as residents of the surrounding areas do not want our areas to lose their identity."*

The petition contained 718 signatures and, in accordance with the Petition Scheme in the Council's Constitution, a report had been prepared by officers.

Councillor Hanson responded on behalf of the Council as the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Planning. She thanked Mrs Walker for attending Council.

Councillors then asked a number of questions, which Councillor Hanson responded to, before proposing:

- "(1) That Council notes the substantive issues raised by this petition and requests that the Director for Economic Growth and Regeneration engage with sponsors of the petition to address their concerns. In particular, this engagement should provide an analysis of responses provided by local residents during the current master-planning process and, as appropriate, explanations where the responses have not informed the masterplan.
- (2) Full Council is asked to mandate that consultation on the subsequent South Lancaster Area Action Plans should include structured questions and provide feedback to those registering comments/objections."

Councillor Dowding seconded the proposition and debate followed.

At the conclusion of the debate, a roll call vote was taken. With 51 members voting for the proposal, none against and one abstention, the motion was clearly carried.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That Council notes the substantive issues raised by this petition and requests that the Director for Economic Growth and Regeneration engage with sponsors of the petition to address their concerns. In particular, this engagement should provide an analysis of responses provided by local residents during the current master-planning process and, as appropriate, explanations where the responses have not informed the masterplan.
- (2) Full Council is asked to mandate that consultation on the subsequent South Lancaster Area Action Plans should include structured questions and provide feedback to those registering comments/objections.

**131 ADDRESS - RIGHT TO FOOD**

The Mayor invited Mr Dusty Thomas to deliver his address to Council in support of the Right to Food motion on notice.

When the speech ended, Councillor Dowding, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities thanked Dusty Thomas for making his address to Councillors and responded to the points raised, noting that the next item for debate would be a Right to Food motion.

**132 MOTION ON NOTICE - RIGHT TO FOOD**

The following motion of which notice had been given to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15 was moved by Councillor Penny and seconded by Councillor Whitaker:-

*"We are seeing a crisis of food poverty born out of the political choices and systemic failings created over the past four decades, which have now reached a tipping point for so many in our communities. The figures are devastating for one of the richest nations in the world and highlight the inequality of the UK in 2020 and going into 2021.*

*The Trussell Trust reports a soaring 81% increase in emergency food parcels from food banks in its network during the last two weeks of March 2020 compared with the same period in 2019, including a 122% rise in parcels given to children as the coronavirus pandemic continued to unfold.*

*This council notes the consistent high rates of poverty across our district. We recognise the growing concern amongst our health and care professionals of the current situation and the likely exacerbation of poverty figures through the impact of the Covid19 pandemic and economic uncertainty as we enter 2021.*

*Morecambe Bay Foodbank recently reported to Councillors that they delivered a staggering 38,196 emergency 5 day food parcels in our district during 2020 [1] – higher than the combined total for the previous 8 years of foodbank activity [2]. Referrals to the foodbank have increased in every ward in our district over the past 12 months; by 368% on 2019 in total [3]. Although the totals are much higher for all areas of the district, the areas with the highest numbers of referrals - Harbour and Poulton - are still the areas of highest demand in 2020 as they were in 2019 [4]. A slightly less extreme, yet still significant picture, emerged from The Olive Branch last year; an increase of 117% in people being fed from February 2020 to the height of their distribution. The Olive Branch also note that the number of children and families that they are having to provide for, compared to vulnerable adults, is becoming a much larger part of their effort; last year saw*

*a 104% increase in children being fed between February and June [5].*

*Weekly use of other food support such as food clubs is even higher than food bank use and is currently 952 households every week that we know of [6]. One of these organisations, Eggcup, has seen their food club membership grow from 40 members in February 2020 to 374 current members; an increase of 835%. That's over 2000 individuals in our district accessing food support every week which helps them to avoid the emergency situation of relying on one of the foodbanks.*

*Data from the DWP as reported by Lancashire County Council [7] shows that households on Universal credit in the Lancaster District has increased from 2,790 in December 2019 to 4,855 by December 2020, a 74% increase.*

*This Council notes that there is important work being carried out locally by Food Futures: North Lancashire's Sustainable Food Network and The Lancaster District Food Poverty Alliance and thanks them for their contributions. We aim to support their work locally and raise awareness in our communities so that more residents and local workers can become involved in addressing food poverty in this district, further afield and in the food supply chain. [8]*

*Lancaster City Council's Cabinet has aligned its priorities with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and have proposed a Council commitment to SDG 2 of Zero Hunger. We support Zero Hunger, and will support the development of a local food system that gives equal access to good nutrition and food preparation skills.*

*The National Food Strategy is the first independent review of England's entire food system for 75 years. Its purpose is to set out a vision for the kind of food system we should be building for the future, and a plan for how to achieve that vision. It is headed by Henry Dimbleby and next reports to Government in early 2021.*

*The Right To Food campaign is arguing that the 11 million people in food poverty should be central to this strategy.*

*Enshrining the 'Right To Food' into law would clarify Government obligations on food poverty and would introduce legal avenues to hold Government bodies accountable for violations.*

*Lancaster City Council resolves:*

- 1. To call on the Government to include the 'Right To Food' in the 'National Food Strategy'.*
- 2. That the Chief Executive write to the Independent Lead, National Food Strategy, Mr Henry Dimbleby, to:*
  - a) Provide local Lancaster District examples and information about the rise in food poverty*
  - b) Call for the Right to Food to be incorporated into the National Food Strategy"*

*There were no questions raised regarding the motion. At the conclusion of a lengthy debate, Councillor Penny called for a recorded vote in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19.4.*

*The votes were recorded as follows:*

**For the proposition:** Councillors Anderson, Anderton, Bannon, Black, Boyd-Power, Brookes, Bryning, Cleet, Clifford, Dant, Dowding, Evans, Frea, Goodwin, Greenall, Greenwell, Hamilton-Cox, Hanson, Hartley, Heath, Jackson (Caroline), King, Knight (Geoff), Knight (Sarah), Lewis, Matthews, Mills, O'Dwyer-Henry, Parr, Penny, Pritchard, Redfern, Reynolds, Robinson, Sinclair, Stubbins, Thomas, Thornberry, Whearty, Whitaker, Whitehead, Wood and Young (43).

**Against the proposition:** None (0)

**Abstentions:** Councillors Barber, Budden, Duggan, Firth, Gardiner, Guilding, Jackson (Joan), Whitworth, Wild and Yates (10).

*(Councillor Dennison was not online at the point of voting.)*

**Resolved:**

1. To call on the Government to include the 'Right To Food' in the 'National Food Strategy'.
2. That the Chief Executive write to the Independent Lead, National Food Strategy, Mr Henry Dimbleby, to:
  - a) Provide local Lancaster District examples and information about the rise in food poverty
  - b) Call for the Right to Food to be incorporated into the National Food Strategy"

### 133 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader presented her report updating Members on various issues since her last report to Council. The report was for noting.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

### 134 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

The Mayor invited the Chair of the Personnel Committee, Councillor Robinson, to present a draft Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 for Council's approval. The Personnel Committee had met earlier in the day at 2.30pm to consider the draft, which was enclosed with the Council agenda. It was noted that there was a typographical error in the Statement in Paragraph 14.3 where the words SCP10 should read SCP3 and that this would be corrected before publication of the document on the Council's website.

Councillor Robinson introduced the Statement for approval by Council before proposing the recommendations of the Personnel Committee:-

- "(1) That the Pay Policy Statement 2021-22 be recommended to Council for approval.
- (2) That the Pay Policy Statement for 2022-23 be fully reviewed alongside the Fair Work Charter during summer 2021."

Councillor Guilding seconded the proposal.

With no one indicating that they wished to speak or vote against the motion, the Mayor declared the proposition clearly carried.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Pay Policy Statement 2021-22 be approved.
- (2) That the Pay Policy Statement for 2022-23 be fully reviewed alongside the Fair Work Charter during summer 2021.

**135 MOTION ON NOTICE - HOUSING**

Councillor O'Dwyer-Henry proposed the following motion having given the required notice to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15:-

*"The Council notes and welcomes the campaigns by ACORN, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, and Shelter which call upon landlords not to evict tenants for the duration of the pandemic;*

*This Council resolves that:*

- (1) *Officers will take reasonable steps to contact landlords, letting agencies and housing providers in the district to request that they:*
  - a) *Do not evict tenants for the duration of the pandemic, (save where exemptions apply for urgent cases such as antisocial behaviour, trespassers, and domestic violence);*
  - b) *Work with the Council, other agencies, tenants' unions to find alternative solutions to eviction, and to seek support from council, Citizen's Advice and other agencies in cases of extended arrears in order to maintain tenants in their tenancies;*
  - c) *Desist from discriminatory practices that act as barriers to benefit claimants such as "No DSS" policies, requiring six months' rent in advance, homeowner guarantors and prohibitive terms and conditions.*
- (2) *The Chief Executive will write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government urging:*
  - a) *The current ban on evictions be extended for a minimum of six months;*
  - b) *Removal of the exemption to this ban which allows for eviction due to rent debt accrued during the past six months;*
  - c) *The eviction ban be extended to apply to lodgers;*
  - d) *The introduction of a grant to help alleviate COVID-related rent debt, as requested by both leading charities, and landlord and property agents' associations;*
  - e) *The quick introduction of the promised Renters Reform Bill to scrap Section 21 evictions,*
  - f) *Introduction of compulsory registration for landlords as requested by many local authorities, in order to better support tenants in their tenancies;*
  - g) *The introduction of enforcement measures to prevent unlawful discrimination against benefit claimants by landlords and letting agents, following court rulings in 2020 that such practices are illegal;*
  - h) *That student housing providers, including universities, are asked to waive rent for student tenants for the duration of the time during which they are unable to access their accommodation due to lockdown regulations, and for the government to provide financial support to cover these costs."*



An officer briefing note had been included with the agenda.

Councillor Robinson seconded the proposal.

There was a lengthy debate on the motion, followed by a roll call vote. The motion was clearly carried with 36 Councillors voting in favour, no votes against and 14 abstentions.

**Resolved:**

That:-

- (1) Officers will take reasonable steps to contact landlords, letting agencies and housing providers in the district to request that they:
  - a) Do not evict tenants for the duration of the pandemic, (save where exemptions apply for urgent cases such as antisocial behaviour, trespassers, and domestic violence);
  - b) Work with the Council, other agencies, tenants' unions to find alternative solutions to eviction, and to seek support from council, Citizen's Advice and other agencies in cases of extended arrears in order to maintain tenants in their tenancies;
  - c) Desist from discriminatory practices that act as barriers to benefit claimants such as "No DSS" policies, requiring six months' rent in advance, homeowner guarantors and prohibitive terms and conditions.
  
- (2) The Chief Executive will write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government urging:
  - a) The current ban on evictions be extended for a minimum of six months;
  - b) Removal of the exemption to this ban which allows for eviction due to rent debt accrued during the past six months;
  - c) The eviction ban be extended to apply to lodgers;
  - d) The introduction of a grant to help alleviate COVID-related rent debt, as requested by both leading charities, and landlord and property agents' associations;
  - e) The quick introduction of the promised Renters Reform Bill to scrap Section 21 evictions,
  - f) Introduction of compulsory registration for landlords as requested by many local authorities, in order to better support tenants in their tenancies;
  - g) The introduction of enforcement measures to prevent unlawful discrimination against benefit claimants by landlords and letting agents, following court rulings in 2020 that such practices are illegal;
  - h) That student housing providers, including universities, are asked to waive rent for student tenants for the duration of the time during which they are unable to access their accommodation due to lockdown regulations, and for the government to provide financial support to cover these costs.

## 136 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM - CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The Leader of the Council introduced a report of the Chief Executive providing information to Council on the government's Local Government Reorganisation consultation and to seek Council's approval of the principles that would form the basis of the Council's response.

There were a number of questions from Councillors which the Leader responded to before proposing:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillor Black seconded the proposal.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Mayor called for a vote. With 40 Councillors voting ‘for’, 7 ‘against’ and 7 of abstentions, the motion was clearly carried.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the update on the consultation process following submission of the Bay Unitary proposal be received;
- (2) That the approach of the Council to the consultation responses as outlined in the report and Appendix 1 of the report be endorsed;
- (3) That the approach to submitting additional commentary on the Bay and North Cumbria proposal as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report be endorsed;
- (4) That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, be authorised to finalise the responses to the consultation for submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the 19 April 2021 deadline.

**(The time being 8.30pm at this point, Council adjourned for a ten minute comfort break in line with Council Procedure rules. The meeting reconvened at 8.40pm.)**

**137 CONSTITUTION - AUDIT COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 13 - 15)**

The Monitoring Officer had submitted a report asking Council to consider revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee.

The Chair of Audit, Councillor Stubbins, introduced the report. There were no questions.

Councillor Stubbins proposed:

“That the revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee attached at Appendix A of the report, be approved.”

Councillor Whitworth seconded the proposal.

There was no debate or dissent shown therefore the Mayor declared the proposal clearly carried.

**Resolved:**

That the revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee, attached at Appendix A of the report and appended to this minute, be approved.

**138 APPOINTMENT TO THE LANCASHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

Councillor Whitehead introduced a report of the Head of Democratic Services to fill a vacant seat on the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel. The seat had formerly been filled by Councillor Parr, who held the Cabinet portfolio which included Community Safety. This

area of responsibility now lay with Councillor Wood, therefore Councillor Whitehead proposed:

“That Councillor Wood be appointed to represent Lancaster City Council on the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21.”

Councillor Hanson seconded the nomination.

There were no further nominations and the Mayor declared Councillor Wood appointed.

***Resolved:***

That Councillor Wood be appointed to represent Lancaster City Council on the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21.

**139 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

There were no changes to report since the last meeting of Council.

**140 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12**

No questions on notice had been submitted.

**141 MINUTES OF CABINET**

Council noted the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021.

***Resolved:***

That the minutes be noted.

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Mayor

(The meeting finished at 8.45 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these minutes,  
please contact Debbie Chambers, Democratic Services - email [dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk)**

***Audit Committee Terms of Reference agreed by Council on 24 March 2021 for inclusion in the Constitution.***

## **SECTION 6 – AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**Composition: Seven Councillors in political balance. Chair appointed by Council annually.**

**The Chair and Vice Chair must not be a member of the Cabinet or an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

**The Committee has the right of access to all the information it considers necessary in connection with the work of the Committee and may consult directly with Internal and External Auditors.**

### **Statement of Purpose**

- 6.1 The audit committee is a key component of Lancaster City Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
- 6.2 The purpose of an audit committee is to provide those charged with governance, independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of Lancaster City Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

### **Core Functions**

#### **Governance, Risk and control**

- 6.3 To review the council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework and consider the local code of governance.
- 6.4 To review the annual governance statement and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account the head of audit's annual audit opinion.
- 6.5 To consider the reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- 6.6 To consider the council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessment on the effectiveness of these arrangements.

- 6.7 To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the council and monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the committee.
- 6.8 To monitor counter fraud, actions and resources and review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.
- 6.9 To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

### **Internal Audit**

- 6.10 To approve the internal audit charter.
- 6.11 To review proposals made in relation the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations on their effectiveness.
- 6.12 To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including resource requirements and the approach to using other sources of assurances and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- 6.13 To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- 6.14 To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit impairments to independence or objectivity of the internal audit team.
- 6.15 To approve significant changes to the audit plan and resource requirements.
- 6.16 To consider reports from the head of internal audit on the performance during the year. This will include an update on the implementation of agreed recommendations.
- 6.17 To consider the head of internal audit's annual report.
- 6.18 To consider a report on effectiveness of internal audit to support the Annual Governance Statement and also any external assessments of effectiveness; i.e. the quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- 6.19 To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the head of internal audit, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.

### **External Audit**

- 6.20 To receive and comment upon the External Auditor's Annual Plan, considering the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- 6.21 To monitor the External Auditor's progress with the Annual Plan.
- 6.22 To consider the external auditors' annual letter and the report to those charged with governance.
- 6.23 To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
- 6.24 To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between internal and external audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.

- 6.25 To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the external auditors, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.
- 6.26 To consider periodically (at least annually) whether the Auditors appointed to carry out the External Audit function remain independent and objective and, that their judgement in carrying out that role has not been impaired as a consequence of their participation in any non-audit reviews, services or advice provided to the Council.

**Financial Reporting**

- 6.27 To review the annual Statement of Accounts on behalf of full Council in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- 6.28 To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.
- 6.29 To consider and endorse amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules and, on behalf of full Council, give any instructions to the Section 151 Officer as may be appropriate.

**Accountability Arrangements**

- 6.30 To prepare an annual report to full Council setting out the committee's work and performance during the year in relation to the terms of reference and to refer to Council any matters it shall see fit.
- 6.31 To review any issue referred to it by the Chief Executive or any Council body.

**Other core functions**

- 6.32 To consider any matters referred to it by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 12.
- 6.33 With the Monitoring Officer to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure the aims and principles of the Constitution are given full effect.
- 6.34 To undertake the annual review of the council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), ensuring compliance with the Code of Practice
- 6.35 With the exception of those parts of the Constitution, which are assigned specifically to the Council Business Committee, to consider and propose to Council any other amendments to the Constitution as necessary.