

COUNCIL MEETING – 13 OCTOBER 2020

PROPOSED CHANGES TO COMMITTEE REMITS AND DELEGATION TO AFFIX THE COUNCIL'S SEAL TO DOCUMENTS

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider proposals for changes to Committee remits, and delegation to chief officers to affix the Council's seal to documents.

2.0 Homes & Communities Committee

- 2.1 The Homes & Communities Committee is currently responsible for policy development and operational decision-making in respect of ICT. However, during the Covid-19 Pandemic and subsequent responses to measures such as the lockdown, it has become clear that the role of ICT is of strategic importance and has a major impact and significance across all Council services.
- 2.2 It is therefore proposed that the responsibility for ICT be placed within the remit of the Policy & Finance Committee, to oversee the direction of travel for the Council as a whole as it moves towards becoming a 'Digital Council'.

3.0 Audit & Accounts Committee

- 3.1 The Audit and Accounts Committee conducted a self-assessment during 2019, benchmarking itself against the questionnaire provided within the "CIPFA Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2018". As part of this process it was identified that scrutiny of the Council's external partnerships and collaboration arrangements was not specifically mentioned within the remit of the Committee. This is at odds with the CIPFA Guidance.
- 3.2 Having reviewed the Council's Constitution, the role of ensuring overview of the Council's collaboration with its external partnerships is not included within the remit of any of its committees, and it is therefore suggested that this role could be delegated to the Audit and Accounts Committee. It is proposed that the delegation would be:- *"To receive an annual report detailing the Council's current external partnership arrangements to give assurance that the partnerships are working effectively."*

4.0 Shareholder Committee

- 4.1 The Shareholder Committee has the strategic oversight of the Council's Development Company – Arkwood Developments Ltd. This includes its performance, management of the relationship between the Council and its Company, compliance with the Governance Agreement, and 'health check' of the Company.
- 4.2 A recent audit by the Council's internal auditor recommended that the Shareholder Committee's remit be amended to include: *"To regularly receive and review the Company's Risk Management Strategy"*.

4.0 Delegated Authority to Affix Council's Seal

5.1 Currently, the Council's Constitution delegates specific power to the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer, and Section 151 Officer to affix the Council's seal to any document on behalf of the Authority. The impact of the Pandemic and consequential arrangements for officers to work from home where they can, has meant that on occasion this has caused some challenges in ensuring that we have the relevant officers available at Castle House to undertake sealing of legal documents. It is therefore recommended that this scheme of delegation be extended to provide that any Chief Officer (as defined by the Local Government and housing Act 1989 and as described in the Constitution - i.e. Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Directors and Assistant Director) be given delegated powers to affix the Council's seal to any document.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- (a) the remits of the Homes & Communities and Policy & Finance Committees be revised as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report;**
- (b) the remit of the Audit & Accounts Committee be amended as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report;**
- (c) the remit of the Shareholder Committee be amended as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report; and**
- (d) the general scheme of delegation to Chief Officers within the Council's Constitution be amended, to give specific delegated power to all chief officers (as defined by the Local Government and housing Act 1989 and as described in the Constitution - i.e. Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Directors and Assistant Director) to affix the Council's seal to any document.**

Background Papers

Nil.

For further information please contact Nigel Hill on Ext 5243 or Karen White on Ext 5240.

John Robinson
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