
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Councillors A Frampton (Chair), P Baillie, Chapman, McCreanor, McEwing and Rayment (Minutes 20 – 25)

Apologies: Councillors Denness

20. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED: that the minutes for the Committee meeting on 2nd October 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

21. **REVIEW OF PRUDENTIAL LIMITS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR 2023/24**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Executive Director Corporate Services (S151 Officer) detailing the Review of the Prudential Limits and Treasury Management Mid -Year 2023/24 particularly the mid-year position, activities and the continued proactive approach which had led to reductions in borrowing costs and safeguarded investment income during the year.

The Committee referred to page 7 of the report and the identified savings and requested the cumulative figure of these which were not detailed within the report but would be shared with Members of the Committee outside of the meeting.

22. **CIPFA REVIEW**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Executive Director Corporate Services detailing the CIPFA review, the conclusions from it and the ongoing work to promote the updated financial strategy.

The Committee referred to paragraph 24 of the report and requested if this included new commitments identified within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy Update that would be presented to the forthcoming Cabinet meeting. In addition, the Committee also referenced £500k identified within the report as being nonportfolio based and questioned what this was as all monies should be aligned to a portfolio. It was noted that the Executive Director for Corporate Services would share with Members of the Committee outside of the meeting the revised table 1 and what the nonportfolio based monies referred to.

The Committee also referred to appendix 3 of the report and the establishment of the Southampton Renaissance Board with the remit focussed on growth, strategic skills, sustainable development, and investment and requested that a progress report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

23. **EXTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Committee received and noted the report and appendix of the External Auditors detailing the 2021/22 Annual Report.

24. **ANNUAL REPORT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS FOR 2022/23**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Service Director Governance, Legal and HR detailing the 2022/23 Annual Review of the Southampton City Council Ombudsman Complaints and summary of the type and number of complaints including a review for the same period 2021/22.

25. **ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2022 - 2023**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Service Director Governance, Legal and HR detailing the Annual Review of Complaints 2022/23. The Committee noted overall complaints registered with the Council had decreased this year (506 this year/537 last year) however there had been an increase in Adult Services complaints with the learning being about communication opposed to any significant issues of service delivery.

26. **STRATEGIC PROCUREMENT ACTIVITY**

The Committee received and noted the joint report of the Executive Directors Corporate Services and Wellbeing and Housing detailing the Council's upcoming Strategic Procurement Activity and the implementation arrangements for and being undertaken during Financial Year 2023/24 to the end of Financial Year 2025/26 by when they needed to be operational by.

27. **HOUSING VOIDS UPDATE**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Executive Director Wellbeing and Housing providing and update on the Housing Voids and Action Plan that had been put into place following areas of limited assurance in a recent audit.

The Committee noted that the report was not good reading identifying Southampton as the 2nd worst nationally, whilst an improvement action plan was in place it was not expected to see huge improvement until Quarter 4 2023 when it was expected that performance would start to Plato with clear improvement in Quarter 1 2024.

The Committee requested that a progress report be presented to a future meeting on performance but also detailing the breakdown of voids and by Wards across the City.

28. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - EXEMPT PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

Chair moved that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of any consideration of the exempt appendices to the following Item.

The appendices were considered to be exempt from general publication based on Category 7A of paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules.

29. **STRATEGIC CONTRACTS - ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee received and noted the joint report of the Executive Directors of Corporate Services and Wellbeing and Housing detailing the Strategic Contracts Annual Report covering the period April 2022 to March 2023. The Committee requested that a progress report be presented to the February meeting.