

**GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE held at
COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON
WALDEN, ESSEX CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2019 at 7.30
pm**

Present: Councillor G Driscoll
Councillors G Driscoll, A Khan, S Luck, G Sell (In place of A Dean), A Storah and J De Vries

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director - Corporate Services), A Bochel (Democratic Services Officer), S Bronson (Audit Manager), P Evans (Customer Services and Performance Manager), D French (Chief Executive), O Knight (PFI and Performance Officer), W Lancaster (Internal Auditor) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

GAP21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dean, Jones and Oliver. In the absence of Councillor Oliver, the Vice Chair would chair the meeting.

GAP22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 July were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said the minutes of the previous meeting contained a reference to an action for the Chair to write to the Council's auditors. The Chair had done this, and a response had not yet been received.

The Director – Finance and Corporate Services said the Assistant Director – Finance was considering running a Member briefing on the budget process.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said he had received a question on ethical procurement from Councillor Luck. He would look to bring an item on this to the next meeting.

In response to a Member question, the Assistant Director – Corporate Services said it would be possible to include matters arising from the previous meeting on future agendas.

GAP23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW 2018/19

The Chair brought Item 4 forward in the agenda.

The Chief Executive gave a summary of the report which said that the annual review letter had been received from the Local Government Ombudsman

summarising the complaints relating to the Council's services dealt with by the Ombudsman's office for the year ended 31 March 2019. The report also detailed the complaints and compliments received by the council in the same period.

In response to Member questions, the Chief Executive said both upheld complaints were regarding the nature of the Planning Department's advice to applicants. Corrective action had been taken in both cases, and the Council had shared its improvement plan with the Ombudsman. There had been issues in the department in Quarter 3 of the 2018-19 municipal year. She had held meetings with staff to understand what the problem was, and additional permanent staff had been recruited to help resolve the issue. The situation continued to be monitored.

GAP24 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 01 MAY - 31 AUGUST 2019

The Internal Audit Manager gave a summary of the report, which detailed the work undertaken by Internal Audit since the last report to the Committee on 30 May 2019 and provided an update on implemented and outstanding internal audit recommendations.

The Internal Audit Manager said since the agenda had been published, a second audit from the 2019-20 programme had been completed, and work was ongoing on another twelve.

GAP25 2019/20 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The PFI and Performance Officer gave a summary of the report which presented the Council's 2019/20 Corporate Risk Register.

In response to a Member question about the lack of a sound base for the development management function on page 46 of the agenda, the PFI and Performance Officer said he would discuss this with the Assistant Director – Planning.

Councillor Khan said he felt the Corporate Risk Register was not focused enough on reputational risk. The Investment Strategy Board was also a cause for concern, and governance might need to be more prominent in the risk register.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said the Corporate Management Team would need to reflect on this and then respond to Councillor Khan.

The Director – Finance and Corporate Services said the Commercial Strategy would be taken to Council on 8 October. There would be regular reports on the strategy brought to the Committee.

GAP26 PFI CONTRACT UPDATE

The PFI and Performance Officer gave a summary of the report, which provided members with an overview of the contract and operational arrangements for the Uttlesford Leisure PFI contract.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services said the team had carried out excellent work and Linteum had begun to hold up the contract with Uttlesford District Council as the way that contracts should be managed.

Councillor Sell declared a personal non-pecuniary interest as a Governor of Forest Hall School, Stansted Mountfitchet.

In response to a Member question regarding the Romeera Leisure Centre, the PFI and Performance Officer said the Council was encouraging 1Life to actively engage with the local community. This was something he would take away from the meeting.

In response to a Member question, the PFI and Performance Officer said the KPI for customer satisfaction was currently under review because it was no longer robust enough or contributed to service provision. It only focused on the results of one national survey and the performance aim was more in line with that of a private organisation. The PFI & Performance Officer was currently working on a new proposal integrating customer feedback into 1Life's service planning, and would present to other project parties once finalised. No specific performance standard had been discussed with 1Life as yet.

The meeting closed at 8.20.