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GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance and Resources Committee held at 6.00 pm on Thursday, 1 July 2021.

Under Regulations made under the Coronavirus Act 2020, the meeting was held virtually. Members of the public were able to view the virtual meeting via the District Council's website at www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk or via our YouTube channel.

PRESENT

Councillor Tom Donnelly - In the Chair

Councillors Jacqueline Allison, Sue Bull, David Chapman, Steve Flitter, Helen Froggatt, Dawn Greatorex, Alyson Hill, Susan Hobson, Stuart Lees, Dermot Murphy, Garry Purdy and Mike Ratcliffe

Paul Wilson (Chief Executive), James McLaughlin (Director of Corporate & Customer Services), Tim Braund (Director of Regulatory Services), Karen Henriksen (Director of Resources), Jenny Williams (Internal Audit Consortium Manager), Deborah Unwin (Human Resources Manager), Sarah Arbon (Senior Planning Officer), Jason Spencer (Electoral and Democratic Services Manager), Angela Gratton, Democratic Services Officer.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Robert Archer, Paul Cruise, Michele Morley (substitute Stuart Lees) and Alasdair Sutton

37/21 – MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, Seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

RESOLVED

(Unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Resources Committee held on 11 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

38/21 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

39/21 – INTERESTS

Councillor Sue Bull declared a personal interest in Item 7 as an Ashbourne Town Councillor.

40/21 – KIRK IRETON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Committee received a report setting out the outcome of the referendum into the Kirk Ireton Neighbourhood Plan and recommending that the Kirk Ireton Neighbourhood Development Plan be formally “made” under Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Dermot Murphy and

RESOLVED
(unanimously)

1. That the result of the referendum on the Kirk Ireton Neighbourhood Development Plan be noted.
2. That the Kirk Ireton Neighbourhood Development Plan be formally “made” as a Neighbourhood Development Plan, and form part of the Development Plan for the Derbyshire Dales.
3. That the Kirk Ireton Neighbourhood Development Plan be used in the determination of planning applications that are situated within the Plan Area in accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

41/21 – ASHBOURNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Committee received a report setting out the outcome of the referendum into the Ashbourne Neighbourhood Plan and recommending that the Ashbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan be formally “made” under Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

It was moved by Councillor Sue Bull, seconded by Councillor Alyson Hill and

RESOLVED
(unanimously)

1. That the result of the referendum on the Ashbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan be noted.
2. That the Ashbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan be formally “made” as a Neighbourhood Development Plan, and form part of the Development Plan for the Derbyshire Dales.
3. That the Ashbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan be used in the determination of planning applications that are situated within the Plan Area in accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

42/21 – BRAILSFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

To receive a report setting out the outcome of the referendum into the Brailsford Neighbourhood Plan and recommending that the Brailsford Neighbourhood Development Plan be formally “made” under Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

It was moved by Councillor Susan Hobson, seconded by Councillor Sue Bull and

RESOLVED
(unanimously)

1. That the result of the referendum on the Brailsford Neighbourhood Development Plan be noted.
2. That the Brailsford Neighbourhood Development Plan be formally “made” as a Neighbourhood Development Plan, and form part of the Development Plan for the Derbyshire Dales.
3. That the Brailsford Neighbourhood Development Plan be used in the determination of planning applications that are situated within the Plan Area in accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

43/21 – CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021-2027

Committee received a report seeking Members approval for an updated Consultation Strategy and a series of options aiming to improve and enrich consultation undertaken by the District Council. The outcome would enable Members to be better informed about the views of local residents when making decisions on changes to service delivery and policies.

The Policy Manager presented the report highlighting the six different proposals to improve and enrich consultation at the Council by increasing the number of responses received from a more age representative group, and asking open questions to elicit qualitative data.

Proposal One - Retain and bolster the Online Panel, continuing to use it for ad-hoc consultation where a quick response was needed, accepting that it was self-selecting and would not be statistically representative. Swift responses could be gathered from the panel, however there was a need to boost membership and, if possible, increase its representativeness. The proposal was to use posters (with a QR code) displayed in libraries, Leisure Centres and sent to other community groups, inviting people to join the panel membership. This work would be carried out internally within existing resources

Proposal Two - To feedback to Online Panel members, via a ‘You Said, We Did’ e-mail newsletter and article in Dales Matters. It was proposed that an article would be included in Dales Matters in the autumn 2021 issue, along with an invitation to local residents to join the Online Panel.

Proposal Three - To include an optional postcode question on surveys, to give a better understanding of the potential reasons for resident satisfaction or dissatisfaction levels; and, where appropriate, to use a small number of qualitative questions to increase the value of responses to consultation

Proposal Four - Carry out a bi-annual paid-for residents' survey which would be similar to the Council's four yearly corporate plan survey. This would be a random survey, which sought to provide a sufficient number of responses (1,000+) to be statistically representative. This survey would monitor satisfaction with the area and the District Council. As the last customer survey of this nature was undertaken in spring 2019 it was considered that running such survey during the remainder of 2021 would be appropriate.

Proposal Five - For major consultations with a high propensity for widespread public interest e.g. changes to waste and recycling collections, the online panel would be supplemented by a web survey, which would be promoted by leaflets and/or social media boosts.

Proposal Six - To plan the use of the Online Panel according to actions contained in the Equality, Consultation and Engagement Plan 2020 to 2022 and for the Senior Management Team to take ownership of the plan

Members raised concerns over using the postcode, the Policy Manager advised that only be the general area code would be used.

Members agreed the proposals were good but asked how was the District Council was going to encourage residents to sign up to the survey and then responding and suggested some incentive could be given. The Policy Manager informed Members incentives had been used on Neighbourhood Plan responses and the same could be used for the online Bi-Annual Survey.

Members asked if the Council had used CRM data to receive feedback on services. The Chief Executive informed Members this was not done at present but could be looked into for the future.

The Policy Manager agreed once the report came in he would prepare evidence and report through to Council.

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

RESOLVED
(unanimously)

1. That the Consultation Strategy 2021 to 2027 as set out in Appendix 1 be approved
2. That the six proposals as set out in Section Three be implemented as ways of seeking to improve the range and depth of consultation undertaken by the District Council.
3. That the inclusion of an additional £2,500 in the annual revenue spending proposals from 2022/23 onwards be approved for the provision of bi-annual residents' satisfaction surveys.
4. That the immediate procurement of a detailed resident's survey with results being presented to Council at its meeting on 25th November 2021 be approved.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

44/21 – DETAIL OF A PROPOSED 'BRIGHT IDEAS' SCHEME

At a meeting of the Joint Consultative Group held on 25 March 2021 it was recommended that Governance and Resources Committee approve the detail of the 'Bright Ideas' scheme (a part of the Reward and Recognition Policy approved in January 2020).

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, Seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

RESOLVED That the detail of the proposed 'Bright Ideas' scheme be approved

For	11
Against	0
Abstain	1

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

45/21 – FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

At a meeting of the Joint Consultative Group held on 25 March 2021, it was recommended that Governance and Resources Committee adopt the proposed Flexible Working Policy as a new employment policy replacing the existing guidance in forms and sample letters.

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, Seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

RESOLVED The Flexible Working Policy be adopted.
(Unanimously)

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

46/21 – ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN – LAND HOLDINGS REVIEW PHASE 1 – THORPE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND ADJOINING LAND

The Committee received a report updating Members in relation to a site identified for disposal that had been discussed at a previous meeting of the Committee on 11 March 2021 when further information had been requested.

The Director of Regulatory Services presented the report informing Members that the piece of land was situated within the Peak District National Park and the site was not large enough to meet the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need identified within Derbyshire Dales. It was estimated to measure 0.08 Ha in area. In searching for a site the minimum area to be considered had been 0.1 Ha, which is why this site had not been included in previous searches. Having made this assessment and further considered the site, Officers were still of the opinion that it was surplus to requirements and should be offered for sale by public auction.

Members asked if a reserve figure could be put on the sale, the Director of Regulatory Services informed Members a reserve would be put on the land and Members would be provided with the figure.

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor David Chapman and

RESOLVED That the site be declared surplus to requirements and offered for sale by public auction on the terms outlined in Appendix 1 to this report.

For 10
Against 0
Abstain 2

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

47/21 - INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

The Committee received the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2020/2021

The Internal Audit Consortium Manager presented the report informing Members that COVID-19 had impacted on the ability to complete the 2020/2021 Internal Audit Plan. The Senior Auditor had spent the majority of her time during the year working on COVID-19 business grants processes, queries and government returns. 32% of the internal audit plan had been completed which had left gaps in the independent assurance that can be provided in terms of governance, risk and control. For this reason a partially limited annual opinion had been given. This did not mean that controls were failing; only that internal audit was unable to confirm that controls were operating from the work undertaken or other assurances available.

The appendix showed for each report the assurance level on the reliability of the internal controls. The report opinions were summarised as follows:

	Number of reports 2019/20	Number of reports 2020/21
Substantial	9	3
Reasonable	9	2
Limited	1	1
Inadequate	0	0

	19	6
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There were no issues relating to fraud arising from the reports.

The following table summarises the performance against key indicators for the Internal Audit Section:

Description	2020/21		2021/22
	Plan	Actual	Plan
Percentage Plan Completed	75%	32%	75%
Number of Complaints	0	0	0
Completion of Annual Report	May 2021	May 2021	June 2022
Customer Satisfaction Score	85%	91%	85%
Net Cost per audit day	£208	£210	£382*
Number/proportion of audits completed within time allocation	80%	**	80%
% Recommendations Implemented where due date has passed	80%	**	80%

* Includes additional audit resource approved by the Committee in March 2021

** Not measured this year due to COVID-19

Members asked if there were any concerns regarding remote working, the Internal Audit Consortium Manager informed Members there were IT processes in place and Managers were monitoring the situation.

Members thanked the Internal Audit Consortium Manager, Director of Resources and their teams for thorough reports and hard work.

It was moved by Councillor Steve Flitter, seconded by Councillor Sue Bull and

RESOLVED That the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2020/2021 be approved.
(unanimously)

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

48/21 – EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The committee received a report providing:

- an update on progress in the external auditors delivering their responsibilities for the audit of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts;
- a summary of recent national reports and publications that may be of interest to Members.

The Director of Resources informed Members that Gavin Barker of Mazars had sent his apologies and confirmed that Amber Davidson would be taking over from John Pressley as the Audit Manager. The Director of Resources updated the Committee on Mazars behalf.

For the audit of the 2020/21 accounts, the external auditor reported that:

- the statutory deadline for the completion of the audit was 30 September 2021;
- the auditors' latest plan was that they would be performing the main element of audit fieldwork in September 2021 (due to a backlog of work, resource difficulties, the departure of staff and difficulties with recruitment and retention). They intended to carry out preliminary work earlier than this in relation to sample selection, so that when work started in earnest, management would have time to gather the supporting information the auditors needed;
- The auditors hoped to present their Audit Completion Report to the Governance and Resources Committee on 30 September 2021 and to be able to issue the audit opinion after the meeting, but they had pointed out that the time scale was very tight and there was a risk to meeting this timetable.
- The auditors would keep management and the Governance and Resources Committee informed as they worked through these difficulties.
- It was likely that the auditors will report on VFM at a later date, in accordance with the revised guidance issued by the National Audit Office, as explained on page 16 of their report in Appendix 1.

It was moved by Councillor Steve Flitter, seconded by Councillor Helen Froggatt and

- Resolved** (Unanimously) 1. That the "Audit Progress Report (February 2021)" from the External Auditor be noted

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

49/21 – PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE 2020/2021 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

The Committee received a report providing an update on the 2020/2021 Internal Audit Plan. The report included a summary of internal audit reports issued since the last meeting of the Committee and an update on the implementation of internal audit recommendations

It was moved by Councillor Sue Bull, seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

- RESOLVED** (unanimously) That the report be noted.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

50/21 – CIPFA FRAUD AND CORRUPTION TRACKER SURVEY 2020

The Committee received a report providing the results of CIPFA's Fraud and Corruption Tracker Survey 2020 which provided a picture of fraudulent activity in local government. (Appendix 1).

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor David Chapman and

RESOLVED
(unanimously)

1. That the results of CIPFA'S Fraud and Corruption Tracker survey be noted.
2. That the fraud prevention measures that DDDC had in place to reduce the risk of fraud be noted.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

51/21 – STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21 – APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Committee received a report seeking approval for the Accounting Policies used within Derbyshire Dales District Council's Statement of Accounts 2020/21, and highlighting changes from last year

It was moved by Councillor Susan Hobson, seconded by Councillor Alyson Hill and

RESOLVED That the 2020/21 Accounting Policies be approved for use within the
(unanimously) Statement of Accounts

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

52/21 – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21

The Committee received a report seeking approval for the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21, which was consistent with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government", and met the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Director of Resources presented the report informing Members of the basis for the internal review of the operation of the Governance Framework and an assessment against the provisions of the CIPFA/SOLACE Code, the arrangements for the 2020/21 financial year had been assessed as COMPLIANT, with some planned improvements required. This indicated that, in general, strong systems were in place but that there were some processes where further action was required. This year five governance issues have been identified; the action plan outlined at the end of the statement summarised the areas of governance focus needed to maintain an effective governance framework in respect of these issues.

It was proposed that over the coming year steps would be made to address the significant governance issues identified in section 7b of the statement to further enhance our governance arrangements. Officers were satisfied that these steps would address the need for improvements identified in the review of effectiveness and would monitor implementation and operation as part of the next annual review.

It was moved by Councillor Mike Ratcliffe, seconded by Councillor Garry Purdy and

- RESOLVED**
1. That the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 is approved.
 2. That the significant governance issues and the action plan to address them, along with the impact of coronavirus on the Council's governance, be noted.

For 12
Against -
Abstain 1

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

The Annual Governance Statement approved at this meeting of the Governance and Resources Committee held on 1 July 2021 was signed by the Leader of the Council, Garry Purdy and Chief Executive, Paul Wilson.

53/21 – EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

RESOLVED (Unanimously) That in accordance with Section 100(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded because it is likely that the nature of the business to be transacted would result in exempt information being disclosed.

At this point the Committee excluded the public and press because in considering this item it contains - Information relating to any individual, Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual and Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

54/21 – FURTHER WRITE OFFS RELATING TO BACKDATING OF COUNCIL TAX BILLS FOR PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED IN DATA MATCHING EXERCISE

The Committee received a report seeking approval for the write off of individual debts arising from council tax backdating cases where the amount requested for write off in each case exceeded £10,000, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Director of Resources presented the report informing Members that in July 2019, a report presented to Council explained that a data matching exercise had been undertaken to match properties on the council tax system with those on Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) system. The report explained that the exercise revealed a number of properties that were not on the council tax data base and had not been billed for council tax. Council agreed an approach to deal with any mismatches identified by the data matching exercises. In January 2021, the Committee approved write offs exceeding £10,000 for four backdating cases. This report covered the remaining three cases.

There had been considerable delays in gathering the information that is required to assess these cases in the depth that is required. This has been exacerbated since workloads and pressures have increased due to the coronavirus pandemic. Lessons had been learnt and processes improved; the Council had procured software to match data from the Council Tax system regularly against the Property Gazetteer, communication with planning and building control teams has been strengthened and the Council Tax team now shares two instead of one visiting Officers.

The Director of Resources presented the three remaining cases to Members as shown in the Exempt Appendix.

Case 1

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy seconded by Councillor Dawn Greatorex and

RESOLVED That the amount of write off for case 1 set out in Appendix 1 is
(unanimously) determined as “*expect the customer to pay the charge since 1 April 2020 over a five year period*”, which results in a write off of £22,741.88 for charges to 31 March 2020.
1. .

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

Case 2

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy seconded by Councillor David Chapman and

RESOLVED That the amount of write off for case 2 set out in Appendix 1
(unanimously) is determined as “*expect the customer to pay the charge since 1 April 2020 over a five year period*”, which results in a write off of £22,743.21 for charges to 31 March 2020.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

Case 3

It was moved by Councillor David Chapman seconded by Councillor Sus Bull and

RESOLVED That the amount of write off for case 3 set out in Appendix 1
(unanimously) is determined as “*expect the customer to pay the charge since 1 January 2020 over a five year period*”, which results in a write off of £32,419.65 for charges to 31 December 2019.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

MEETING CLOSED – 8.25 PM

CHAIRMAN