

**Eden District Council**  
**Accounts and Governance Committee**

18 April 2019

## Review of the Effectiveness of the Accounts & Governance Committee

<b>Portfolio:</b>	None
<b>Report from:</b>	Director of Corporate Services
<b>Wards:</b>	All Wards
<b>OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To respond to the recommendations of an external review of the Accounts and Governance Committee.

### 2 Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Committee agrees to perform a self-assessment on an annual basis from 2019/20 onwards and reports this to Council.
2. The Committee is provided with enhanced regular training and supporting materials.
3. Consideration is given to subscribing to CIPFA's Better Governance Forum.

### 3 Report Details

- 3.1 As reported at Accounts and Governance Committee at its meeting of 21 February 2019, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy ("CIPFA") has undertaken a review of the Accounts and Governance Committee against the best practice framework for Audit Committees. The full report and recommendations were presented on that agenda.
- 3.2 The constitutional working group convened on 12 March 2019 to consider a response to the recommendations, for approval by the Accounts and Governance Committee on 18 April 2019. Responses to each of the recommendations are given below.
- (1) There should be an annual self-assessment of the effectiveness of the Committee using the guidance set out in the CIPFA publication 'Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2018)' and use the outcomes from these reviews to develop and enhance the Committee.  
  
 Response: Agreed, with effect from 2019/20, the proposal being to present a report to the April Accounts and Governance Committee and then to the May Council meeting, to satisfy recommendation 2 below. The Annual Review of Effectiveness is to be included as an annual item on the Committee's work plan.
  - (2) The Committee should produce an annual report to full Council, setting out the work undertaken by the Committee during the year, its achievements, and showing where it has added value to the Council.  
  
 Response: Agreed, as above.

- (3) Officers should put together a programme of training sessions for Members of the Committee, covering the key topics covered by an audit committee.

Response: Agreed and already in progress; a comprehensive calendar of training events for Members is currently being prepared, which will include training for Members of the Accounts and Governance Committee.

- (4) Officers should put together a series of regular briefing papers for Members of the Committee covering current and key topics that should feature the Committee's radar.

Response: Agreed and this will be integral to recommendation 3. Any events will be supported by appropriate training materials for Members.

- (5) Consideration should be given to subscribing to CIPFA's Better Governance Forum, which would give the Council access to a range of specialist advisers, training courses, webinars and quarterly briefings.

Response: Agreed; the cost is circa £2,000 per annum, which could be met from existing budgets. The Assistant Director Finance will consider whether this could be a valuable resource.

- (6) The Committee should consider co-opting an independent and unelected Member to help strengthen the skill sets of the Members.

Response: The Committee agrees to keep this under active review and will include the need for this as part of its Annual Review of Effectiveness (see recommendation 1). It is not judged necessary at present. It is noted that there is professional officer support to the Committee and external assurance provided from both the external auditor and TIAA Limited. The existing arrangements for involvement of independent persons could also be widened to include an explicit invitation to attend Accounts and Governance Committee meetings and comment on agenda items at such meetings.

- (7) Consideration should be given to reducing the size of the Committee.

Response: The Committee agrees that its Members should be actively engaged in its work. It is not judged that reducing the number of Members will achieve this at the present time.

## **4 Policy Framework**

- 4.1 The Council has four corporate priorities, which are:

- Decent Homes for All;
- Strong Economy, Rich Environment;
- Thriving Communities; and
- Quality Council.

- 4.2 This report meets the Quality Council corporate priority.

## **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The Committee are being asked to approve the proposed responses to the external recommendations.

## 6 Implications

### 6.1 Financial and Resources

- 6.1.1 Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the Council's stated priorities, as set out in its Council Plan 2015-2019, as agreed at Council on 17 September 2015.
- 6.1.2 There are no direct financial or resources implications arising from this report. Subscribing to the Better Governance Forum would cost circa £2,000, which could be found from within existing budgets should it be judged that this is a valuable resource.

### 6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 There are no other implications.

### 6.3 Human Resources

- 6.3.1 There are no Human Resources implications.

### 6.4 Statutory Considerations

Consideration:	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	There are no implications
Health, Social Environmental and Economic Impact	There are no implications
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications
Children and Safeguarding	There are no implications

### 6.5 Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
No change following the review.	The Committee misses the opportunity to improve effectiveness.	Consideration of the recommendations and implementation where these are agreed.

## 7 Other Options Considered

- 7.1 No other options have been considered.

## 8 Reasons for the Decision/Recommendation

- 8.1 To enable Members to approve and agree a course of action following the review of effectiveness.

### Tracking Information

Governance Check	Date Considered
Chief Finance Officer (or Deputy)	27 March 2019
Monitoring Officer (or Deputy)	28 March 2019
Director	2 April 2019

**Background Papers:** Review of Accounts and Governance Committee, as reported to Accounts and Governance Committee, 21 February 2019

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