

By Ben Watts, Director of Law and Governance

To: County Council – 23 July 2021

Subject: Amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Governance and Audit Committee

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Governance and Audit Committee, 23 April 2021;
Selection and Member Services Committee, 1 July 2021

Future Pathway of Paper: None.

Summary: This paper proposes changes to the Terms of Reference for the Governance and Audit Committee

1. Introduction

- a) At the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee on 23 April 2021, the Corporate Director of Finance and I took a paper proposing changes to its Terms of Reference.
- b) There have been a number of high-profile issues for local authorities relating to wholly owned companies. Members of the Governance and Audit Committee have repeatedly expressed a desire to receive more information in order that they can scrutinise the actions of the executive relating to the Council's wholly owned companies.
- c) At the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee in January and the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee in March, it was agreed that changes were required to the existing arrangements to simplify accountabilities, increase data and improve reporting to support scrutiny in relation to the oversight of the governance of the companies. The April paper set out the proposed changes to achieve this.
- d) At the April meeting, the Governance and Audit Committee agreed that no Member should serve on the Committee, including as a substitute, unless they had received the appropriate training. This has now been included in the draft Terms of Reference.
- e) The draft amendments agreed by the Governance and Audit Committee are attached in the Appendix. The changes are marked in bold text and underlined.

- f) These proposed amendments, with the inclusion of the section on training, were then taken to the Selection and Member Services Committee on 1 July 2021. This Committee agreed to recommend to County Council that it approve the amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Governance and Audit Committee as set out in this report.

- g) In agreeing, it was noted that one Member expressed concerns about ensuring that the requirement for mandatory training did not prevent the attendance and right to speak of Members not ordinarily part of the Committee. It was confirmed that the longstanding right to attend and speak as set out in paragraph 16.21 of the Constitution persisted.

2. Recommendation

That the County Council approve the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Governance and Audit Committee.

3. Background Documents

None.

4. Contact Details

Ben Watts, Director of Law and Governance
03000 416814
benjamin.watts@kent.gov.uk