

From: Dylan Jeffrey, Cabinet Member for Communications and Democratic Services

To: County Council: 13 March 2025

Subject: **Governance and Audit Committee Terms of Reference: Update**

Previous Pathway: Governance and Audit Committee, 23 January 2025; Selection and Member Services Committee, 27 February 2025

Status: Unrestricted

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## 1. Overview

- a. It is best practice to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the Governance and Audit Committee. This should include different aspects, such as terms of reference and work plans.
- b. Given the Council's current operating context (as outlined in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement), it was timely to review the Committee's effectiveness ahead of the May 2025 elections. The intention was to ensure that the terms of reference, Committee support and work plans assist the Committee in carrying out its role in ensuring that the authority's corporate governance framework meets recommended practice, is embedded across the whole Council, and is operating throughout the year with no significant lapses.
- c. Further to the effectiveness review in December 2024, it was recommended that the Committee's terms of reference be updated to ensure that the Committee is properly constituted and has a clear remit. The Governance and Audit Committee reviewed the proposed changes on 23 January 2025 and agreed to ask the Selection and Member Services Committee to review the proposals. The latter Committee did so on 27 February 2025 and agreed to recommend them to County Council.

## 2. Proposed Changes

- a. It has previously been highlighted that updating the terms of reference is an iterative revision process based on the need to continuously improve Kent County Council's governance. Further to the review of effectiveness, the proposed revised version of the terms of reference is set out in Appendix A. The current terms of reference with tracked changes are also set out in Appendix B for comparison.
- b. The proposed changes are intended to provide the Committee with a more coherent, strategic, terms of reference. The objective is to improve the

readability of the text whilst ensuring that this does not inadvertently diminish any of the Committee's powers. Therefore, where appropriate, headline phrases have been used to bring together and clarify roles and responsibilities, instead of listing individual reports. This is in response to feedback received via the survey that not all respondents had fully read the Governance and Audit Committee's Terms of Reference. It also helps remove some areas of possible ambiguity.

### **3. Recommendation**

County Council is asked to agree the revised Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix A and ask the Monitoring Officer to update the Constitution accordingly.

### **4. Appendix**

Appendix A - Proposed Updated Terms of Reference

Appendix B – Proposed Updated Terms of Reference With Tracked Changes.

### **5. Background Documents**

None.

### **6. Report Author and Relevant Director**

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