

Minutes of a meeting of the Constitution Committee held via Microsoft Teams video conferencing on Friday, 27 November 2020.

PRESENT

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (in the Chair)

Dr. T. Eynon CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC

Mr. B. L. Pain CC
Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC

Note: The meeting was not open to the public in line with Government advice on public gatherings however the meeting was broadcast live via YouTube.

11. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2020 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

12. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

13. Questions asked by members.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

14. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

15. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

16. Statement of Accounts and Pension Fund Accounts 2019/20.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which presented the 2019/20 financial statements for approval and reported the key findings from the external audit of the accounts. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 6', is filed with these minutes along with a supplementary report which set out the more detailed financial information.

The Director of Corporate Resources clarified that the audit of the accounts was almost complete but some work was still ongoing. The audit was required to be completed by 30 November 2020. In response to a concern raised by a member that the auditors had proposed an increase in their fees at a time when the income of many organisations was reducing the Director of Corporate Resources stated that the Corporate Governance Committee had already raised this issue with the auditors and further negotiation would take place with the auditors regarding the fees.

The Director of Corporate Resources acknowledged the concerns of members regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit and explained that this was a national problem and it was hoped that additional funding would be received from the Government for schools.

In response to a question from a member the Director of Corporate Resources clarified that highways infrastructure was owned by the County Council and featured on the balance sheet at depreciated historic cost in line with accounting requirements. This contrasted with depreciated replacement cost which would be a much more significant amount and would give a false impression of the Council's assets were it to feature on the balance sheet given that the Council could not sell highways infrastructure to raise income.

The Committee thanked the Director of Corporate Resources for his work in producing the financial statements.

RESOLVED:

That the financial statements for 2019/20 be approved.

12.30 - 12.50 pm
27 November 2020

CHAIRMAN