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To: MEMBERS OF THE AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Councillors Langton (Chair), Allen (Vice-Chair), Bloore,
Crane, Davies, Dennis, Flower, Gray, O'Driscoll and
C.White

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01883 722000

Substitute Councillors: Botten, Cooper, Pursehouse and
N.White

C.C. All Other Members of the Council

25 October 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER, 2021 AT 7.30 PM

The agenda for this meeting of the Committee to be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted is set out below. If a member of the Committee is unable to attend the meeting, please notify officers accordingly.

Should members require clarification about any item of business, they are urged to contact officers before the meeting. In this respect, reports contain authors' names and contact details.

If a Member of the Council, not being a member of the Committee, proposes to attend the meeting, please let the officers know by no later than noon on the day of the meeting.

Yours faithfully,

David Ford
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence (if any)

2. Declarations of interest

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter:

(i) any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) and/or

(ii) other interests arising under the Code of Conduct

in respect of any item(s) of business being considered at the meeting. Anyone with a DPI must, unless a dispensation has been granted, withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the relevant item of business. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer or her staff prior to the meeting.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on the 30th September 2021 (Pages 3 - 12)

To confirm as a correct record

4. **To deal with any questions submitted under Standing Order 30**
5. **To deal with any issues 'Called In' under Part F of the Council's constitution**
6. **External Audit - 19/20 Accounts Update** (Pages 13 - 16)
7. **Internal Audit - review and update** (Pages 17 - 20)
8. **Grant Thornton Update** (Pages 21 - 34)
9. **Appointment of External Auditors** (Pages 35 - 46)
10. **Annual Governance Statement 2020 - 2021** (Pages 47 - 78)
11. **Complaints update** (Pages 79 - 86)
12. **Residents' Survey 2021** (Pages 87 - 120)
13. **Performance Exceptions Report - Verbal Update** (Pages 121 - 124)
14. **Any other business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered as a matter of urgency**

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the meeting of the Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 30 September 2021 at 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Langton (Chair), Allen (Vice-Chair), Bloore, Crane, Davies, Dennis, Flower, Gray, O'Driscoll and N.White (substitute in place of C.White)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Farr and Lockwood

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors C.White

132. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 8TH JULY 2021

The actions in the minutes of the meeting of 8 July 2021 were reviewed and it is noted that:

- Grant Thornton had reported to the Committee following the completion of their investigation;
- the Committee had not received an update on the contents of the Planning Advisory Service report. It was noted that the report had been circulated to Councillors via Group Leader or Deputy Group Leader;
- SIAP would produce a paper for the next meeting that would outline the standards that SIAP had to comply with in respect of internal audit planning and the role of the Committee in that process;
- project management would be an agenda item for a future committee meeting;
- the TDC Anti-Fraud Policy had not been circulated but this would be completed as soon as possible;
- case papers from the Council Tax fraud criminal investigation could be circulated;
- the Chair of the Committee who has the power to sign off the council's accounts;
- a verbal update would be given at the relevant agenda item regarding the steps taken by each policy committee where a risk had been identified in its own exception report. Further work was continuing in respect of the financial exposure for each of the missed targets; and
- further information regarding the high level Police performance metrics would be sought by the committee clerk from the relevant team and details provided to the Committee.

Taking into account these responses, the minutes from the meeting were agreed.

133. EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Laura Rodgers from Deloitte presented a verbal update on the current position of the signing off of the Council's accounts for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Neither of the accounts were ready to be signed off. The delay to 2020/21 sign off was due to the delay in the finalising of the Council's outturn report. The delay to the 2019/20 sign off had been caused by an error in the level of aggregation used which had been difficult to remedy. The issue was almost fixed and it was anticipated that there would be a short time to completion once fully resolved. A rough estimate of 120 working hours was suggested as a possible time frame until completion. Deloitte regretted the position with the 2019/20 sign off and stated that the accounts would not be signed off until all issues had been resolved and checked. The audit process for 2020/21 was in a much better position and has been a process as a result of the lessons learnt from the previous year's audit.

It was confirmed that the regulatory deadlines for both 2019/20 and 2020/21 has been missed but it was believed that there were no sanctions imposed on the Council for not signing the accounts in time. It was noted that the auditing of Councils was a national issue and there were issues across the sector.

Councillor Langton proposed a recommendation which was seconded by Councillor O'Driscoll. Upon being put to the vote this was agreed.

Following the recommendation, Deloitte informed the Committee that, on the issue of costs, there was likely to be an overrun for 2019/20 on the original costings and that negotiations would be entered into with the Chief Finance Officer regarding this. This had already been agreed with Mr Ben Sheriff and minuted. However, Deloitte would be mindful of their actions that resulted in the overrun and take their share of the responsibility.

Councillor Langton requested that the CFO scrutinise any invoice received from Deloitte and proposed a further recommendation that the outcome of this be referred back to the Committee. The recommendation was seconded by Councillor O'Driscoll. Upon being put to the vote the recommendation was agreed.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the Committee requests further details from Deloitte on:
 - i. the overall reason for the 19/20 accounts sign off delay;
 - ii. what principal actions are needed to complete sign off; and
 - iii. a forecast sign off date.
- B. once the proposed division of costs has been made, the findings be brought back to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee to approve.

134. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - AUGUST 2021

Natalie Jerams presented a report which provided an overview of

- the current status of live internal audit reports;
- an update on progress against the annual audit plan;
- a summary of internal audit performance, planning and resourcing issues; and
- a summary of significant issues that impact on the Chief Internal Auditor's annual opinion.

It was noted that there had been a slight adjustment to the report since publication; there were now 32 management actions overdue (15 medium and 17 high). A summary was provided on six new reports that had been finalised since the last report. The subsequent discussion on these reports included reference to the following issues:

- On the issue of cyber security, it was agreed not to discuss the actions in an open forum. Melanie Thompson agreed to provide a written update to the Committee in response to questions raised in respect phishing and cyber security awareness training;
- In respect of Building Control, it was noted that the new Temporary Chief Planning Officer had only been in position a few weeks and was unable to provide an update but would do so at the next meeting of the Committee;
- On the issue of Treasury Management, the Chief Finance Officer stated that some of the report recommendations had been completed and others in progress. A new treasury management provider (Orbis) had been taken on and were working towards updating all relevant documentation in order to comply with internal audit recommendations;
- In respect of Information Governance, it was noted by the Head of Legal that a new Data Protection Officer was now in post who would primarily be dealing with the report recommendations and would be supported by a new Deputy DPO. FOI reports were now taken to the ELT and Information Governance Management Team. The Record Retention and Disposal Schedule was being reviewed and would be circulated to Senior Managers, SLT and ELT to update. Work had commenced on the Information Asset Register and it was planned for this work to be completed by November;
- It was agreed that a copy of the current document deletion policy would be circulated to the Committee. It was noted that the document required updating and it was agreed that a final copy of the updated policy would also be circulated to the Committee.
- It was noted in the audit report that the Council did not maintain a grant register, which had resulted in a 'No' assurance position. The Finance Department would create a template for the rest of the organisation to complete to allow review on a regular basis along with associated policies and procedures;
- On the issue of Health and Safety, it was noted that a further 'No' assurance opinion had been given due to policies and procedures not being updated following internal reorganisation. A project team had been set up to address the issues raised by the report and to make sure all updated information is properly presented to staff. It was confirmed that HSE have carried out inspections where required.

- It was noted that the number of outstanding issues was worrying and performance needed to improve which would be reflected in the proposed recommendations under the next agenda item.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

135. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT & OPINION 2020/21

Neil Pitman presented a report which set out the Chief Internal Auditors opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of risk management, internal control and governance for the financial year 2020/21.

A 'Limited' overall assurance opinion had been provided. It was noted that a 'Limited' assurance is not given lightly and that the same opinion had been given in financial year 2019/20 – this situation was described as uncommon. It was commented on that Officers had been engaged and supportive of the audit work throughout the year and resources were now focused in the key areas. It was noted that 'Limited' opinions probably make up about 10% of the reviews undertaken by SIAP elsewhere.

The Chief Executive highlighted that a greater degree of control was required on the actions arising from Audit & Scrutiny Committee meetings and this was being addressed by the ELT team. It was also confirmed that discussions were taking place between authorities to investigate the sharing of governance responsibilities.

Councillor Langton proposed an additional recommendation relating to the reporting of underlying reasons for internal audit delays. The recommendation was seconded by Councillor Davies. Upon being put to the vote the recommendation was agreed.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the report be noted; and
- B. the Executive Leadership Team set out in a brief report to be presented at the 2 November Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting the underlying reasons for the late closures of internal audit actions and what steps will be taken to address them.

136. FORENSIC REVIEW AND FACT FINDING INVESTIGATIONS INTO A POTENTIAL BUDGET GAP FOR 2020/21 AND IMPLICATIONS FOR 2021/22

In accordance with the Strategy & Resources Committee's decision of 8th June 2021, Grant Thornton LLP UK had been commissioned to undertake a review following the discovery of a potential £920,000 budget gap in 2020/21. Grant Thornton had since completed its investigation and had made 15 recommendations for the Council to consider. Its report, presented by Thomas Foster, confirmed that:

“there was an unfunded revenue deficit of £920,500 within the 2020/21 outturn position that was not detected during the year. The implications of this are that the Council’s outturn position is £920,500 less favourable than had been expected ... It also appears that this error was not identified during the 2021/22 budget setting process and was therefore rolled forward as part of the baseline budget for 2021/22 that was approved by Council in February 2021. This means that its impact will continue to be relevant for the General Fund in each financial year until it is resolved.”

The deficit arose from a reduction in notional pension costs which should have been offset to zero without any budgetary affect. Grant Thornton’s report sets out the relevant chronology of events, together with key learning points and recommendations.

A short discussion took place regarding the investigation process and Grant Thornton’s findings.

The Chief Finance Officer presented her report in response to Grant Thornton’s findings, which confirmed that:

- all the recommendations proposed by Grant Thornton would be implemented as part of the ongoing Finance Transformation Programme;
- there were some issues not covered by the limited scope of the Grant Thornton report that still needed to be reviewed;
- a fundamental ‘root and branch’ review of the more fundamental areas of finance will be carried out as part of the Transformation programme;
- a detailed review of all 2021/22 budget lines to ensure a correct starting position for future budget setting in 2022/23;
- the team who is leading the Finance Transformation Programme has been commissioned to develop one plan which brings together transformation programme items, all of the Grant Thornton recommendations and all other related issues to give confidence and assurance to Members that:
 - a balanced budget can be set for 2022/23;
 - the 2020/21 outturn can be finalised and published; and
 - the 2020/21 Accounts can be finalised and signed off.

In response to Member questions it was confirmed that:

- a skills and training requirements of the Finance team will be part of the new Target Operating Model (comprised as part of the Finance Transformation Programme);
- despite the position of uncertainty, there is no reason to believe a Section 114 Notice would need to be issued. If no other mitigation was available (to be determined through the 2021/22 budget review) the budget gap could be met out of Reserves;

- other areas of concern still exist in respect of Council finances which were outside the scope of the Grant Thornton report. The Chief Finance Officer stated that she would bring a report back to the Committee on 2 November which would set out the urgent activities finalise and publish the 2020/21 Outturn, sign the Accounts for 2021/22 and allow enough confidence in the underlying position for a budget to be set for 2022/23;
- an Organisational Development workstream is included as part of the Finance Transformation Programme to assist senior managers in understanding their accountabilities, roles and responsibilities in respect of budget setting and management;
- the Grant Thornton recommendations would be reviewed by SIAP as part of the Financial Resilience Audit that was currently on hold in the 2020/21 review cycle;
- a Member training and development programme will be introduced in in the next financial year which would assist Members in respect of council finances.

Councillor Langton proposed the following slightly amended recommendation to note the Grant Thornton report. Councillor O'Driscoll seconded the recommendation. Upon being put to the vote, the recommendation was agreed.

Councillor Langton proposed the following additional recommendation relating to the prioritising and reporting of the Action Plan recommendations to the Committee. Councillor White seconded the recommendation. Upon being put to the vote, the recommendation was agreed.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the Grant Thornton report be noted; and
- B. that the Executive Leadership Team prioritises the recommendations in the Action Plan set out in Annex A of the report and agrees owners and dates for these prioritised actions to be in a brief report to be presented at the 2 November Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting.

137. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21

The Head of Legal presented a report on the Council's updated Annual Governance Statement ("AGS") for 2020/21. Councillors were asked to consider and approve the report which contained further actions to be undertaken during the course of 2021/22. It was noted that an additional section had been added to the AGS to reflect the impact of the Covid pandemic over the course of the year.

It was noted that a list of questions had recently been sent to the Head of Legal to answer in respect of the AGS and that a response to these would be given in the form of a revised AGS at the next committee meeting on 2 November.

It was confirmed that the external auditor had received and reviewed the AGS and although they had not yet commented on its content they would be doing so during the course of the audit.

Councillor Langton proposed a further recommendation relating to the prioritising of the actions to be taken in 2021/22 and for a report to be presented at the next committee meeting. The recommendation was seconded by Councillor O'Driscoll. Upon being put to the vote, the recommendation was agreed.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the Committee notes the Annual Governance Statement as set out in Appendix A to the report; and
- B. the Executive Leadership Team prioritises the actions to be taken in 2021/22 as set out from page 26 onwards in paragraph 16 of the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan and agrees owners and dates for these actions in a brief report to be presented at the 2 November Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting.

138. COMPLAINTS UPDATE

The Head of Communications and Customer Experience presented a quarterly report, covering the period of April to June 2021, which provided an update on complaints and Freedom of Information requests received by the Council.

In the last quarter, there had been 69 Stage 1 complaints, 15 of which had since escalated to Stage 2 complaints. Members were provided with a breakdown and further information relating to the complaints received. Additional details were also provided on the lessons learnt when dealing with past complaints and improvements that have been introduced to the complaints procedure. Further work was being undertaken on the complaints system to provide officers with more information relating to the complaints received.

The Head of Communications and Customer Experience offered to send out a note to Councillors after of the meeting on how the Council uses complaints to improve its services to aid in their understanding of the process. This offer was accepted.

In the last quarter 91 Freedom of Information requests had been received, with the majority received in respect of Business Rates, Public Health and Waste and Recycling. Information on the responses to these requests was provided.

The subsequent discussion included reference to the following:

- information relating to the number of complaints that proceeded from Stage 2 to the Local Government Ombudsman was not collated quarterly but there was an intention to include this in future reports;
- in respect of providing detail in respect of the nature of complaints received, the ongoing refinement to the complaints system should be able to produce this information in the future;
- in respect of compliments received, an internal medium was used to publicise this information and it may be possible to bring a general summary of this to Committee;

- it was requested that details relating to the outcome from a complaint be made available, such as amounts of compensation paid or actions taken to address issues raised in the complaint. It was noted that managers were involved in the complaints process to deal with any repeat issues or to provide additional training or praise to Officers as appropriate;
- it was confirmed that there is a statutory policy in place for Housing complaints which makes payments from the Housing Revenue Accounts, but there is no wider policy for all other complaints. Consideration was being given as to whether a policy should be put in place. It was noted that the Local Government Ombudsman may instruct the Council to make compensatory payments;
- it was agreed that it was important that details contained in anonymous complaints be reviewed and assessed although it was noted that few were received;
- there was a public duty to report complaints even though there was no statutory duty to report to any of the committees regarding the Council's performance;
- it was noted that vexatious complainants should also be identified in the complaints process and dealt with under the relevant procedure;
- it was noted that it was National Customer Service week from 4 October and Councillors were encouraged to meet with the Customer Service team next week to understand the role that they undertake;
- that ELT should consider whether complaints received in respect of services that are not supplied, such as planning pre-applications, should be recorded as complaints;
- it was noted that information relating to payments made to staff in employment cases would be provided to the Committee as requested by Councillor Flower;
- complaint benchmarking between difference councils was difficult as each organisation recorded complaints differently and there was no County-wide approach to assist with this;
- the Temporary Chief Planning Officer made the Committee aware that he was very focused on the level of complaints in the Planning Team and was keen to fully restore the pre-application process.

RESOLVED – that the Committee note and accept the report.

139. POLICY COMMITTEES' QUARTER 1 21/22 EXCEPTION PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Programme Management Officer presented an exception performance report which set out the performance and risk headlines from the performance and risk reports which had already been reported to the four main policy committees earlier in the committee cycle.

The subsequent discussion made reference to the following issues:

- a response to a question raised at the Community Services Committee on 21 September about the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme target and its potential impact on new businesses opening would be supplied to the Committee after the meeting by the Executive Head of Communities;
- in respect of the Housing Committee target of the average time taken to re-let local authority sheltered housing, the high number of days had been caused by three properties only and the delays were attributable to Covid. The Executive Head of Communities offered to email members of the Committee to provide further information;
- it was noted that the missed target relating to people in 'Urgent Need' would keep being raised on the report as it is undeliverable but this should be owned by the Council as a serious failure. It was noted by the Executive Head of Communities that the Council was doing all it could to meet this target via various schemes and it was important to highlight this as an important issue for the Council;
- in respect of the monitoring of the quality of private rented accommodation, it was noted that the Environmental Health team work on the investigation and enforcement of housing standards. The Executive Head of Communities offered to provide a briefing note to Councillors on this issue.
- it was requested that financial exposure associated to the risks in the report be included in the report to the next Committee;
- The Chairman emphasised again that the aim of this agenda item is to have presented only those Performance exceptions deemed High Impact and those Risks categorised Red. The Committee then reviews the effectiveness of the respective Action agreed by the relevant Committee and proposes if additional/alternative actions be sought.
- it was noted that staff sickness was very high and had been for a long period of time. The Chief Executive agreed that this was an issue that had to be taken very seriously and the underlying reasons for this would be investigated and addressed;

The Chair proposed a recommendation that a proposal be brought to the next committee by the Programme Management Officer in respect of the format of future reports. This recommendation was seconded by Councillor O'Driscoll.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the Committee notes the performance and risk exceptions for Quarter 1 2021/22; and
- B. the Programme Management Officer will liaise with Committee Members and put together a proposal for the rationalisation and prioritisation of exceptions that the Committee needs to review and a verbal update be provided at the next Committee meeting.

140. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

It was agreed that any pre-prepared alternative recommendations be circulated to the Committee at the start of a meeting.

It was noted that the Audit and Scrutiny meeting on 12 October would be cancelled. The next meeting of the Committee would be on 2 November.

The Chair suggested that it may be necessary to review, simplify and prioritise all of the action plans and lists that the Council was currently working to with a view to amalgamating into one manageable document. This observation was supported by the Chief Executive and this has already been raised with ELT.

Rising 10.05 pm

External Audit - 19/20 Accounts Update

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 2 November 2021

Report of: Chief Finance Officer (Section 151)

Purpose: For information

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

As resolved at the Audit & Scrutiny Committee of 30 September 2021, the Council's external auditors, Deloitte, will provide a verbal update to inform the Committee on the current position of the signing of the Council's 2019/20 accounts.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

Contact officer Anna D'Alessandro Interim Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer
ADAlessandro@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

That Deloitte's update be noted, and that authority be delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, to give final approval to those Accounts, as per the original recommendation of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee of 26 November 2020.

Reason for recommendation:

There is a legal requirement for the Council to sign off the 2019/20 accounts as soon as possible.

Introduction and background

1. At the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 30 September 2021, Deloitte provided a verbal update to the Committee on the current position of the signing off of the Council's 2019/20 and 2020/21 accounts.
2. The Council does not currently have an indicative date for when the 2019/20 accounts would be completed. Deloitte were also unable to provide the substantive reasons for the delay. Consequently, the Committee resolved that Deloitte provide the following further information:
 - a. the overall reason for the 2019/20 accounts sign off delay;
 - b. what principal actions were needed to complete sign off; and
 - c. a forecast sign off date.

The verbal update that will be provided to the Committee is Deloitte's response to the above resolution.

3. It should be noted that information relating to the signing off the 2020/21 accounts are outside the scope of this report.

Other options considered

No other options were considered as the completion of the 2019/20 is a statutory requirement.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no direct financial implications of the report. The signing of Accounts by the external auditors is a statutory requirement and the Council will continue to work with Deloitte in whatever capacity required to achieve sign off.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

In June 2019, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) asked Sir Tony Redmond to undertake an independent review (Redmond Review) of the effectiveness of local audit and the transparency of local authority financial reporting. The response of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was published in 2020 with an update in May 2021. Whilst some recommendations have been agreed, others are being considered further with further guidance awaited later in the year.

One of the areas of focus of the review related to the timescales that both local authorities and external auditors must comply with because of a significant proportion of the audits not meeting the existing statutory deadlines. The Redmond report concluded that the local audit market is very fragile and that the current fee structure does not enable auditors to fulfil the role in an entirely satisfactory way. With 40% of audits failing to meet the required deadline for report in 2018/19, there is a serious weakness in the ability of auditors to comply

with their contractual obligations. The findings from the Review have a direct bearing and relevance to the audit of the Council's 2019/20 accounts. The timeliness of the Council's ability to publish the audited results of the 2019/20 audit means that it will be quickly superseded by the 2020/21 accounts. Failure to produce a final set of accounts for 2019/20 is not only a statutory breach but also has consequential reputational damage to the Council.

Equality

There are no Equalities implications directly arising from the statutory audit of the financial statements.

Climate change

There are no Climate Change implications directly arising from the statutory audit of the financial statements.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None.

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Internal Audit – review and update

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 2 November 2021

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose: To provide a summary of the underlying reasons for the late closure of internal audit actions and set out steps being taken to address them

Publication status: Unrestricted

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

As requested at the last meeting of Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 30 September, this report summarises why there are a growing number of recommendations identified by Internal Audit, which have not been actioned and so remain outstanding.

As your new Chief Executive this is an area where I share the concern of Councillors. In addition to setting out why actions have not been addressed, this report sets out steps being taken to address this issue.

This report supports the Council's priority of:

Effective budget monitoring giving a clear and precise overview of the overall Revenue and Capital financial position

Contact officers: David Ford – Chief Executive
DFord@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

That Members note the report

Reason for recommendation:

To provide Members with the underlying causes and actions being taken in response to the concerns raised regarding the need to address the outstanding Internal Audit actions in a timely fashion

Introduction and background

1. Since joining Tandridge District Council in June 2021 it has become evident to me as Chief Executive that there is an issue with management and staff capacity, which has impacted on performance and morale.
2. Some of these issues can be traced back to Customer First, a major Council-wide transformation programme, which was implemented about 3-years ago. The programme was designed to improve the way the Council operated and it impacted on staff roles and responsibilities.
3. All staff were split between specialists and case workers. Roles were realigned in the structure and end-to-end processes broken. Capacity was greatly reduced, halved in many cases as staff roles were supposed to be supported and replaced by technology. The technology in many instances was not appropriately implemented and staff were not trained on the use of the systems which were implemented. This encouraged a number of manual workarounds allowing for errors to be introduced into processes.
4. Staff who were not successful in securing a role were allowed to leave immediately, having a detrimental impact on business continuity coupled with significant impacts on staff morale.
5. These negative impacts have had such a profound impact on the effective operations of the Council that they are still being felt a number of years later.
6. The process of realigning posts commenced a few months ago in various parts of the Council but there are many parts still living with legacy Customer First. For example, Finance has now been realigned bringing back the Exchequer team under the CFO. This realignment however has only brought in sundry debts into Finance not all of the Council's debt management. Most of the remainder sits in Revenues and Benefits and Housing Teams, under the responsibility of the Executive Head of Communities & Housing (EHCH). Although the CFO and EHCH have a good working relationship and collaborate well and so are finding a Council-wide approach to debt management through the Finance Transformation programme, it is just one example where end-to-end processes do not have one owner or one person having complete responsibility or oversight of the entire process. This results in activities being duplicated or worse, falling through the cracks.

7. Within the context of the challenges resulting from Customer First, part of my role as the Council's new Chief Executive, working with managers and staff, is to deliver demonstrable improvements in organisational performance and staff morale. This work is underway as, working with Managers, I'm scoping out the immediate priorities for the Council's officer leadership team.
8. More specifically, in order to address the issue of outstanding Internal Audit actions and other more immediate concerns regarding capacity and accountability, I am implementing a number of improvements, including:
 - Monthly discussions with SIAP and ELT to review and monitor outstanding actions and provide a realistic date for delivery given the current constraints. This is already underway.
 - Review and realignment of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). Capacity has been heavily depleted placing all the senior management responsibilities on a few already very overworked officers.
 - Review and reconsider the working arrangements between the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and ELT and the role of each group.
 - Introduce appropriate arrangements and good principles of project and programme management such as: planning and timetabling of activities; documentation completion and filing; Risks (including mitigations and owners), Issue, Action and Decision (RAID) logs; engagement and consultation; evidence bases for all investment decision (by way of the HM Treasury 5 case model of business cases), supported by appropriate training and education.
 - Baselineing of all of our actions on improvement activities associated with, Internal Audit, Corporate Improvement and the Annual Governance Statement, to identify duplication or gaps and have one tracker which identifies all the activities we said we were going to undertake with deliverable timelines and owners. This exercise is now underway and will be discussed regularly at ELT.
9. Our journey of improvement and reset is further advanced in some areas (e.g. Finance Transformation Programme and the Joint Working Agreement with the County) than others. However, my priority is to address this more broadly. Some of this work will start to take shape as part of the Twin Track Budget setting process (Track 2 for 2023/24) which is currently in train.
10. Since I commenced, I have been very cognisant of these issues and have been taking steps to address those with appropriate consultation of all those involved. Invariably, these things take time to unravel and address. I do want to again reassure the Committee that I, and ELT take inaction and lack of hitting timelines very seriously.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no direct financial implications of the report. The CFO (s151) agrees with the proposals identified in this report to address the underlying concerns of inaction of Internal Audit recommendations in a timely fashion

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

It is important that the Council maintains a sound internal control environment. Actions that the Internal Auditors have put forward to address risk and control weaknesses have to be monitored more closely by senior management (SLT/ELT) and where appropriate, agreement needs to be reached as to when the corrective action will be taken. An action that is not implemented means that the weakness or risk originally identified in the audit report, and which the action was designed to address, will remain as a risk to the organisation.

As the report has been requested by the Committee and as such, they need to decide whether the recommendations put forward in this report meet their concerns and if not, what further action should be taken.

Equality

This report does not disadvantage or discriminate against any different groups with protected characteristics in the community.

Climate change

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None

----- end of report -----

Grant Thornton Report Update

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 2 November 2021

Report of: Chief Finance Officer (Section 151)

Purpose: To update Members on the recommendations identified in the Grant Thornton Report to Audit and Scrutiny on 30th September 2021 and the associated actions necessary to provide confidence in the underlying position for a budget to be set for 2022/23.

Publication status:

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

At the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 30th September, Grant Thornton presented their findings from their forensic review into the £920k gap discovered as part of closing the 2020/21 accounts.

This report identified 15 recommendations for the Council to take to address the consequences of their findings. The Council has accepted these recommendations and established plans to address the necessary actions.

Following consideration of the report and findings, the Committee requested that:

- a) the Chief Finance Officer set out the urgent activities to finalise and publish the 2020/21 Outturn, sign the Accounts for 2020/21 and allow enough confidence in the underlying position for a budget to be set for 2022/23.
- b) the Executive Leadership Team prioritises the recommendations in the Action Plan set out in Annex A of the report and agrees owners and dates for these prioritised actions to be in a brief report to be presented at the 2 November Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the timelines and owners for addressing those recommendations identified and the additional actions underway to allow the Council to set a budget for 2022/23.

The report will be supported by a presentation at the November 2nd meeting.

This report supports the Council's priorities of:

- Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need
- Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge
- Becoming a greener, more sustainable district

Contact officer Anna D'Alessandro
Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer
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Recommendation to Committee:

It is recommended that the Committee approve the urgent actions (with associated owners and timelines) to be addressed as Phase 1 of the response to the Grant Thornton review along with the other actions identified to allow the Council to be confident in setting a budget for 2022/23.

Reason for recommendation:

In order for Members to have confidence that the urgent actions necessary to address the issues raised in the Grant Thornton review are underway and will be completed as part of the Phase 1 response along with the other actions identified to allow the Council to be confident in setting a budget for 2022/23.

Introduction and background

1. The key activities underway are to allow for; the 2020/21 Accounts to be finalised and signed-off; the 2020/21 Outturn to be finalised and presented to the S&R Committee on 2 December 2021 and to allow enough confidence in the underlying position for a budget to be set for 2022/23. These are set out in Appendix 1, along with the key actions arising from the Grant Thornton review and report.

2020/21 Outturn and 2020/21 Accounts

2. As Members are aware, although the 2020/21 Outturn has been largely completed, it has indicated a substantial surplus for the Council, even after allowing for the unexpected pressure arising from the £920k gap identified following the Grant Thornton review.
3. In order to ensure that Members have full confidence in the 2020/21 Outturn numbers, a further in-depth review was scoped and is currently underway. This review includes a number of areas being explored in detail to ensure that Members have confidence in the underlying position. The activities which relate specifically to the 2020/21 Outturn and closure are shown under the heading of Financial due diligence activities and include:

- a review of the Balance Sheet, Reserves, Provisions and associated policies
 - a review of the control and suspense accounts
4. These activities may impact on both the 2020/21 Outturn position and also have implications for future years.

2022/23 Budget

5. In addition to the areas set out above, we are undertaking further due diligence in other areas including:
- a line-by-line review of every 2021/22 budget line, to ensure the base budget is sound
 - a review of the 2021/22 year to date Month 6 budget position
6. It is clear however that there will remain a significant budget gap in 2022/23. The size of this gap will be dependent on both the findings of the due diligence review and a number of other factors, notably the Spending Review and Local Government Finance Settlement plus additional service pressures.
7. In order to support the identification of savings opportunities and undertake the necessary validation to help address the 2022/23 gap, the Council has commissioned IMPOWER to work with all services to undertake an intensive exercise through to the end of November leading up to the setting of the draft budget on 2nd December.

Grant Thornton review actions

8. Included as Appendix 2 is an updated detailed Action Plan addressing the recommendations made by Grant Thornton in their report. This shows clearly the actions that will address each of the recommendations, target dates for completion and the responsible Officers.
9. The actions identified have been separated into three phases according to their urgency, importance and the time required to complete them. The first of these identifies key actions which need to be completed prior to setting the 2022/23 budget with a further two phases following on.
10. The high-level actions have also been shown on the roadmap in Appendix 1 to put them in the context of the other actions necessary to be able to set a budget for 2022/23. The numbers in the roadmap cross-reference to the recommendations referenced in the detailed report in Appendix 2.
11. Overall accountability for the delivery of the Action Plan will jointly rest with the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Executive. Accountability for individual recommendations in the Action Plan are clearly identified and assigned to named Officers.
12. In considering the actions required to address the recommendations in the Action Plan, it is important to note that there needs to be a change in culture and governance behaviour, as well as changes to processes and systems.

Formal sign off and approval

13. The aim is to complete all of the above key activities to allow for confirmation of the 2020/21 Outturn position, have the 2020/21 Accounts signed (subject to external audit), and to propose a 2022/23 draft budget to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 2nd December.
14. It is likely however that further work will be required after this in advance of setting the final budget in February 2022.
15. Further verbal updates will be provided to the Committee on the progress of the work at the meeting on 2nd November.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

Comments have been covered in the body of the report

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

There are no additional legal comments arising from this report. The recommendations and proposed actions by the Council are set out in the body of this report and accompanying Action Plan.

Equality

None

Climate change

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Roadmap of Key activities

Appendix 2 – Grant Thornton Action Plan

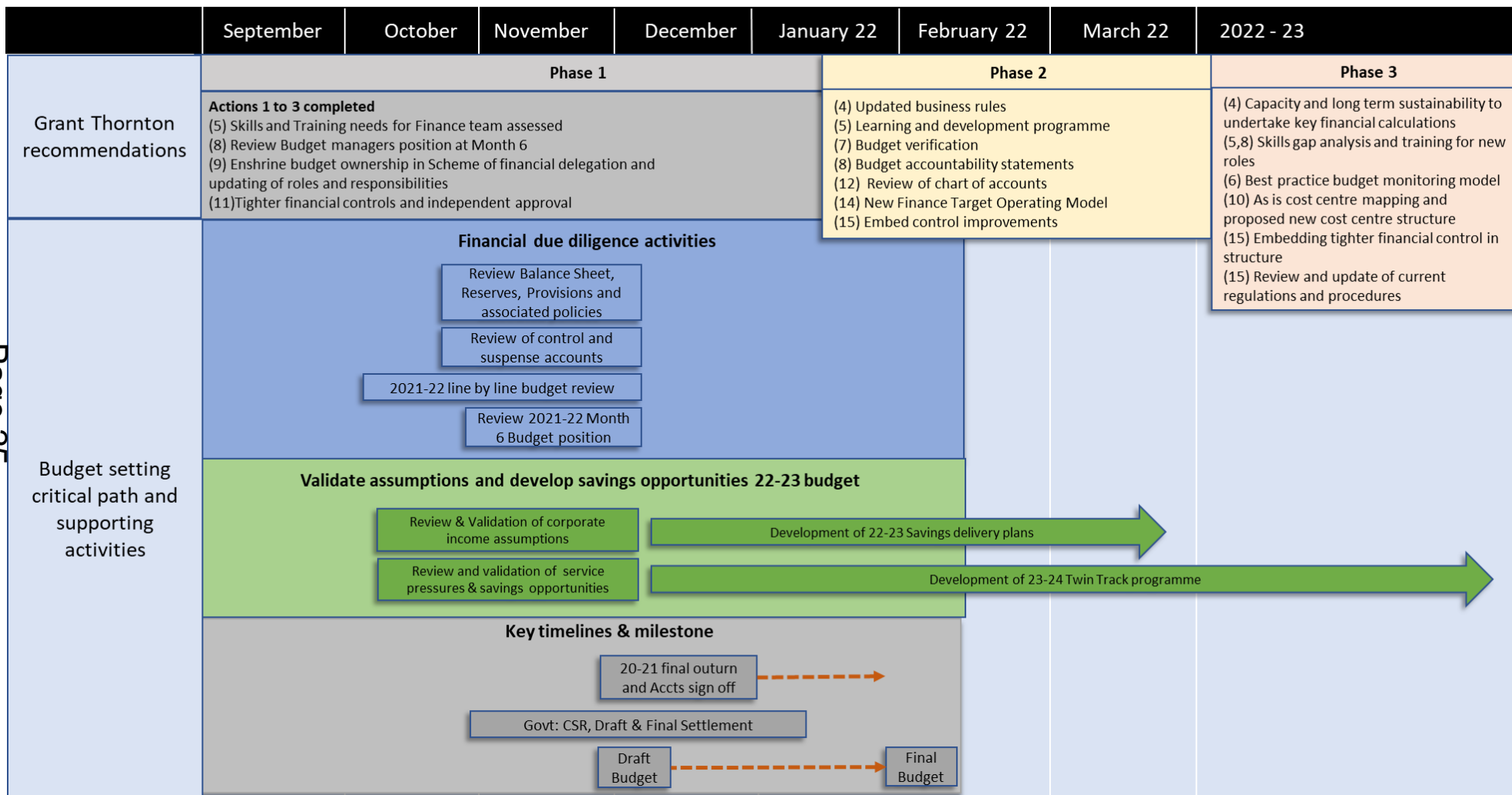
Background papers

Audit and Scrutiny Report – 30th September

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Appendix 1 – Roadmap of key activities

Baseline financial position and budget setting critical activities



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Grant Thornton action Plan to address controls over the preparation of the budget .

No.	Recommendation	Officer Responsible & Target Date	Deliverables	Mitigating action/Update
1	When the draft budget and MTFs are being prepared, the opening budget baseline should be reconciled to the prior year's approved budget and any variances should be fully reconciled (e.g. to in year virements).	Complete		Agreed. 21/22 Budget as set out in the Council Report (Feb 20) is now reconciled to Agresso budget to ensure both the detailed budget and Budget movements are clearly actioned. Any movements to budget lines in 2021/22 will be reported in monthly finance reports in a virements schedule
2	The current year proposed budget, and future projections in the MTFs, should be subject to analytical review at directorate and cost centre level, to ensure that all movements away from the baseline opening budget reconcile to known adjustments (e.g. savings and pressures).	Complete		Agreed. Budgets as set out in Council Papers are now reconciled to the Agresso budget to ensure both the detailed budget and adjustments (including pressures and savings) are correct
3	Segregation of duties should be re-established between the calculation of all key budget items (such as business rates) with review and approval undertaken by the Chief Finance Officer.	Complete		Agreed. The re-establishment of this segregation was undertaken as part of setting the 21/22 Budget with the secondment of a SCC Officer (Business Partner – Corporate) leading the budget process and the review of all assumptions was undertaken by the CFO.
4	The Council should ensure that the finance team includes sufficient skills and capacity to undertake key calculations, including	Phase 2 - 30/04/22 Mark Hak-Sanders	Building skills and capacity	All Finance business rules are being reviewed and will form part of the Partnership agreement

No.	Recommendation	Officer Responsible & Target Date	Deliverables	Mitigating action/Update
	calculation of business rates, to enable the Chief Finance Officer to function effectively in a review and approval role.		<p>Agreement of roles and responsibilities in the new Finance model</p> <p>Business rules update as part of the partnership agreement</p>	<p>to be included in ways of working in the team in the future.</p> <p>The Finance team is agreed and the team being put in place, using newly agreed training programme and skills gap analysis, which form part of the recruitment process.</p>
5	<p>The Council should undertake a skills and training needs assessment of the finance team and provide targeted investment in staff development where it will have most impact. The Council should also consider whether skills gaps are best addressed through targeted recruitment.</p>	<p>Phase 2 – 30/04/22</p> <p>Cath Edwards / Rona Leitch</p>	<p>Skills assessment model</p> <p>Skills gap analysis</p> <p>Learning & development</p>	<p>This process has been completed, one member of TDC's finance team has been displaced. Recruitment underway to build the new Finance model</p>

THE BUDGET MONITORING PROCESS

No.	Recommendation	Officer Responsible & Target Date	Deliverables	Mitigating action/Update
6	We recommend that the monthly budget monitoring information provided to budget holders is improved to incorporate greater focus on comparison to the prior year budget and the expected profile of the budget throughout the year, with greater focus on documenting and challenging the basis by which budget outturn has been forecast.	Phase 2: 30/04/22 Verity Royle and Rona Leitch.	Clear roles and responsibilities Clear budget model Build confidence in new budget model Continuous improvement in place Best practice model	The Budget model is being defined using a 'best practice model' whilst ensuring clearly defined cost centres, with accountability and ownership in place. Working with budget holders for S&R during the last month, budget holders are becoming clear with their budget position. Looking at the data more regularly.
7	Within the monitoring information, the inclusion of budget lines that have zero budget in the current year but did have budget in the prior year should be considered as a failsafe measure. This could provide a useful reference point to monitor the impact budget changes may be having on current year variances. (Note that this could have highlighted the removal of one half of the £920,500 pensions costs, enabling it to be questioned early in 2020/21).	31 March 2022 Verity Royle and Rona Leitch	Verification of budget Best practice model	The correct starting point for monitoring during 2022/23 will be the balanced Revenue Budget 2022/23 to be approved by Full Council in February 2022. The finance team is working with service managers to rethink monthly reporting. The format and contents of monitoring reports will be sharpened up, key risks and variances will be included and this improvement will be dovetailed with the TFT. Verification of budget underway, including a line by line review – long term this function will be owned by the relevant budget managers providing surety of the budget position.

No.	Recommendation	Officer Responsible & Target Date	Deliverables	Mitigating action/Update

STRENGTHENING CORPORATE BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY

No.	Recommendation	Officer Responsible & Target Date	Deliverables	Mitigating Actions/Update
8	The list of cost centres should be reviewed to ensure that each one is assigned a responsible budget holder and Finance Manager, and that these responsibilities are fully communicated and understood by the named individuals. This can be augmented by asking budget holders to sign a written declaration that they have agreed and accept responsibility for their assigned cost centres.	Phase 1 / 2 Mark Hak-Sanders	Phase 1 - Budget holders position on M6 Phase 2 Budget Accountability Statements – distribution and content Roles and responsibilities documentation and training	Cost centre accountability is being built into the Finance model, looking for Budget positions at M6 from the appropriate budget managers in Phase 1. Clear roles and responsibilities training will be undertaken during phase 2
9	The Council should make sure that the ownership of and responsibility for budgets, is fully enshrined in the Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation, so that individuals can clearly and directly be held accountable for budget management.	Phase 1 Cath Edwards	Review and confirm formal financial regulations Scheme of delegation Roles and responsibilities Updated business rules – Phase 2	Ongoing review of financial regulations and the approach to be taken to get the most success from the regulations and partnership agreement

No.	Recommendation	Officer Responsible & Target Date	Deliverables	Mitigating Actions/Update
	To support this, the Council should consider the establishment of a separate Scheme of Financial Delegation that sets out the respective financial responsibilities of roles and grades in detail.		Training for budget holders	
10	All budget holders and supporting finance business partners should review all the list of cost centres they are responsible for and ensure that the purpose and relevance of these is fully understood. Council policy should make clear that the onus is on the individual to make sure they have the level of understanding required.	Phase 1 Rona Leitch and Verity Royle	Cost centre mapping and proposed new cost centre structure Training for budget holders	Reviewing the cost centre structure and ownership and looking at options how best to implement accountability and best working practice
11	There are a number of ways that adjustments to the draft budget could have been subject to tighter financial control, where segregation of duties is difficult to maintain (for example, in regard to corporate items adjusted only at year end). We recommend, the implementation of a schedule of adjustments that requires the dual signature of both Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Finance	Phase 2 Verity Royle	Clear roles and responsibilities Embed structure in the Finance team Scheme of delegation	Looking at embedding new behaviour in the Scheme of delegation. Building a model of how we would like to work in the future whilst taking a pragmatic approach to finalising the budget.

No.	Recommendation	Officer Responsible & Target Date	Deliverables	Mitigating Actions/Update
	Officer to confirm that all adjustments have been reviewed independently of the author.			
12	The Council should review its chart of accounts to make sure it properly reflects current operations and desired approach to financial control. In particular, we recommend that the list of cost centres is reviewed and unused or unnecessary cost centres are removed or rationalised as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process.	Phase 2 Verity Royle/Laura Rowley	Review chart of accounts	This will be carried out as part of Phase 2
13	We recommend that within the next two years, the Council undertakes a targeted zero-based budgeting exercise to fully refresh the budget and its cost centres, to ensure they align to current needs and services, and to strengthen the ownership and responsibility among budget holders and responsible management accountants. This should initially focus on Strategy and Resources and Corporate budgets.	To be implemented in phases. Ricky Fuller	Out of scope of this current TFT programme	Agreed. This will be a useful exercise to understand the true cost of services and is a substantial piece of work most effectively delivered in stages. For 22/23 the TFT will focus on having a tighter grip on financial controls, reporting, roles/ responsibilities/ accountabilities, improved end-to-end processes (including automation where possible), capacity and capability. A zero-based budgeting exercise can be undertaken in key areas as part of the 23/24 budget setting process. In the meantime, a line-by-line review has been undertaken for all pay related cost centres for S&R and a full review of all 21/22

No.	Recommendation	Officer Responsible & Target Date	Deliverables	Mitigating Actions/Update
				budgets will be undertaken for M6 reporting. This will form the basis for the roll-over of budgets for 22/23.

DEVELOPING A STONG FINANCIAL CULTURE

No.	Recommendation	Officer Responsible & Target Date	Deliverables	Mitigating Action/Update
14	The Council should consider how it can strengthen the Council's financial culture, building characteristics such as professional scepticism, self-review and empowerment to challenge management, starting with the finance team.	Phase 1 Mark Hak-Sanders	New Target operating model – 1 st Jan 2022 Embed accountability and ownership in Finance team	Agreed. This culture change will take some time but will be embodied as part of the Joint Working Agreement with the County and new TOM, ensuring that professional scepticism and curiosity and self-review, proactivity and peer challenge are encouraged and embraced. The TFT contains an Organisational Development workstream to build stronger financial management and accountability both within and outside of Finance.
15	The Council should review and update its Financial Regulations, with particular focus on embedding the control improvements recommended	Phase 2 Mark Hak-Sanders/Janyce	Embed control improvements Review current regulations and procedures Deliver training in new processes	Training plan is being created, for the Executive team and all budget holders.

	<p>in this report . This should be supplemented by detailed documented financial procedures where appropriate.</p>	<p>Danielczyk/Cath Edwards/Rona Leitch</p>	<p>Review and update policy documents</p>	<p>This will be complete by end of March 2022 for monitoring against the 2022/23 budget</p> <p>Review of all financial procedures and published in one location. This will be aligned to the Regulations and be completed after the Regulations have been approved</p>
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The actions identified above which form part of the TFT will be monitored through the TFT Programme governance to ensure delivery.

Appointment of External Auditors

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 2 November 2021

Report of: Anna D'Alessandro Interim Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer ADAlessandro@tandridge.gov.uk

Purpose: To appoint the external Auditor for the accounts for the five-year period from 2023/24

Publication status: Unrestricted

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

The current auditor appointment arrangements cover the period up to and including the audit of the 2022/23 accounts. The Council opted into the 'appointing person' national auditor appointment arrangements established by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the period covering the accounts for 2018/19 to 2022/23.

PSAA is now undertaking a procurement for the next appointing period, covering audits for 2023/24 to 2027/28. During Autumn 2021 all local government bodies need to make important decisions about their external audit arrangements from 2023/24. They have options to arrange their own procurement and make the appointment themselves or in conjunction with other bodies, or they can join and take advantage of the national collective scheme administered by PSAA.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

Contact officer Anna D'Alessandro Interim Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer ADAlessandro@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

It is recommended that the Committee accepts Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023

Reason for recommendation:

If the Council wishes to take advantage of the national auditor appointment arrangements, it is required under the local audit regulations to approve the recommendation at Full Council. The opt-in period starts on 22 September 2021 and closes on 11 March 2022. To opt into the national scheme from 2023/24, the Council needs to return completed opt-in documents to PSAA by 11 March 2022.

Introduction and background

- 1 Regulation 19 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 requires that a decision to opt in must be made by Full Council. The Council needs to respond formally to PSAA's invitation in the form specified by PSAA by the close of the opt-in period (11 March 2022).
- 2 PSAA will commence the formal procurement process in early February 2022. It expects to award contracts in August 2022 and will then consult with authorities on the appointment of auditors so that it can make appointments by the statutory deadline of 31 December 2022.
- 3 The national opt-in scheme provides the following:
 - the appointment of a suitably qualified audit firm to conduct audits for each of the five financial years commencing 1 April 2023.
 - appointing the same auditor to other opted-in bodies that are involved in formal collaboration or joint working initiatives to the extent this is possible with other constraints.
 - managing the procurement process to ensure both quality and price criteria are satisfied. PSAA has sought views from the sector to help inform its detailed procurement strategy.
 - ensuring suitable independence of the auditors from the bodies they audit and managing any potential conflicts as they arise during the appointment period.
 - minimising the scheme management costs and returning any surpluses to scheme members.

- consulting with authorities on auditor appointments, giving the Council/Authority the opportunity to influence which auditor is appointed.
- consulting with authorities on the scale of audit fees and ensuring these reflect scale, complexity, and audit risk; and
- ongoing contract and performance management of the contracts once these have been let.

4 The Invitation

PSAA is now inviting the Council to opt in for the second appointing period, for 2023/24 to 2027/28, along with all other eligible authorities. Based on the level of opt-ins it will enter into contracts with appropriately qualified audit firms and appoint a suitable firm to be the Council's auditor. Further background information relating to PSAA's invitation are provided in Appendix A to this report.

Other options considered

- 5 If the Council did not opt in there would be a need to establish an independent auditor panel to make a stand-alone appointment. The auditor panel would need to be set up by the Council and the members of the panel must be wholly, or a majority of independent members as defined by the Act. Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees, excluding current and former elected Members (or Officers) and their close families and friends. This means that elected Members will not have a majority input to assessing bids and choosing to which audit firm to award a contract for the Council's external audit.
- 6 Alternatively, the Act enables the Council to join with other authorities to establish a joint auditor panel. Again, this will need to be constituted of wholly or a majority of independent appointees. Further legal advice would be required on the exact constitution of such a panel having regard to the obligations of each Council under the Act and the Council would need to liaise with other local authorities to assess the appetite for such an arrangement.
- 7 These would be more resource-intensive processes to implement for the council, and without the bulk buying power of the sector-led procurement would be likely to result in a more costly service. It would also be more difficult to manage quality and independence requirements through a local appointment process. The council is unable to influence the scope of the audit and the regulatory regime inhibits the council's ability to affect quality.
- 8 The Council and its auditor panel would need to maintain ongoing oversight of the contract. Local contract management cannot, however, influence the scope or delivery of an audit.

- 9 The national offer provides the appointment of an independent auditor with limited administrative cost to the council. By joining the scheme, the council would be acting with other councils to optimise the opportunity to influence the market that a national procurement provides.
- 10 The recommended approach is therefore to opt into the national auditor appointment scheme.

Conclusion:

- 11 It is recommended that the Committee accepts Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There is a risk that current external audit fee levels could increase when the current contracts end. It is clear that the scope of audit has increased, requiring more audit work. There are also concerns about capacity and sustainability in the local audit market.

Opting into a national scheme provides maximum opportunity to ensure fees are as realistic as possible, while ensuring the quality of audit is maintained, by entering into a large-scale collective procurement arrangement.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires the Council to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding year.

Section 8 governs the procedure for appointment including that the Council must consult and take account of the advice of its auditor panel on the selection and appointment of a local auditor.

Section 12 makes provision for the failure to appoint a local auditor. The Council would have to immediately inform the Secretary of State, who may direct it to appoint the auditor named in the direction or appoint a local auditor on behalf of the Council.

Section 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations in relation to an 'appointing person' specified by the Secretary of State. This power has been exercised in the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (SI 192) and this gives the Secretary of State the ability to enable a sector-led body to become the appointing person. In July 2016 the Secretary of State specified PSAA as the appointing person.

Risk Management Implications

The principal risks are that Tandridge Council:

- fails to appoint an auditor in accordance with the requirements and timing specified in local audit legislation; or
- does not achieve value for money in the appointment process

These risks are considered best mitigated by opting into the sector-led approach through PSAA.

Equality

There are no direct equalities implications of this report

Climate change

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Background to the PSAA Invitation

Background papers

None

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APPENDIX A

Background Information to the PSAA Invitation to Opt into the External Audit procurement process

1 The report concludes that the sector-wide procurement conducted by PSAA will produce better outcomes and will be less burdensome for the Tandridge Council than a procurement undertaken locally because:

- collective procurement reduces costs for the sector and for individual authorities compared to a multiplicity of smaller local procurements.
- if it does not use the national appointment arrangements, Tandridge Council will need to establish its own auditor panel with an independent chair and independent members to oversee a local auditor procurement and ongoing management of an audit contract.
- it is the best opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified, registered auditor - there are only nine accredited local audit firms, and a local procurement would be drawing from the same limited supply of auditor resources as PSAA's national procurement; and
- supporting the sector-led body offers the best way of ensuring there is a continuing and sustainable public audit market into the medium and long term.

2 Procurement of External Audit for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28

Under the Local Government Audit & Accountability Act 2014 ("the Act"), the council is required to appoint an auditor to audit its accounts for each financial year. The council has three options.

- To appoint its own auditor, which requires it to follow the procedure set out in the Act.
- To act jointly with other authorities to procure an auditor following the procedures in the Act.
- To opt into the national auditor appointment scheme administered by a body designated by the Secretary of State as the 'appointing person'. The body currently designated for this role is Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA).

In order to opt into the national scheme, a council must make a decision at a meeting of the Full Council.

3 The Appointed Auditor

The auditor appointed at the end of the procurement process will undertake the statutory audit of accounts and Best Value assessment of the council in each financial year, in accordance with all relevant codes of practice and guidance. The appointed auditor is also responsible for investigating questions raised by electors and has powers and responsibilities in relation to Public Interest Reports and statutory recommendations.

The auditor must act independently of the council and the main purpose of the procurement legislation is to ensure that the appointed auditor is sufficiently qualified and independent.

The auditor must be registered to undertake local audits by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) employ authorised Key Audit Partners to oversee the work. As the report below sets out there is a currently a shortage of registered firms and Key Audit Partners.

Auditors are regulated by the FRC, which will be replaced by a new body with wider powers, the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA) during the course of the next audit contract.

Councils therefore have very limited influence over the nature of the audit services they are procuring, the nature and quality of which are determined or overseen by third parties.

4 Appointment by Tandridge Council itself or jointly

Tandridge Council may elect to appoint its own external auditor under the Act, which would require the council to.

- Establish an independent auditor panel to make a stand-alone appointment. The auditor panel would need to be set up by Tandridge Council itself, and the members of the panel must be wholly, or a majority of independent members as defined by the Act. Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees, excluding current and former elected members (or officers) and their close families and friends. This means that elected members will not have a majority input to assessing bids and choosing to which audit firm to award a contract for Tandridge Council external audit.
- Manage the contract for its duration, overseen by the Auditor Panel.

Alternatively, the Act enables Tandridge Council to join with other authorities to establish a joint auditor panel. Again, this will need to be constituted of wholly or a majority of independent appointees. Further legal advice would be required on the exact constitution of such a panel having regard to the obligations of each Council/Authority under the Act and the Council/Authority would need to liaise with other local authorities to assess the appetite for such an arrangement.

5 The national auditor appointment scheme

PSAA is specified as the 'appointing person' for principal local government under the provisions of the Act and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015. PSAA let five-year audit services contracts in 2017 for the first appointing period, covering audits of the accounts from 2018/19 to 2022/23. It is now undertaking the work needed to invite eligible bodies to opt in for the next appointing period, from the 2023/24 audit onwards, and to complete a procurement for audit services. PSAA is a not-for-profit organisation whose costs are around 4% of the scheme with any surplus distributed back to scheme members.

6 Pressures in the current local audit market and delays in issuing opinions

Much has changed in the local audit market since audit contracts were last awarded in 2017. At that time the audit market was relatively stable, there had been few changes in audit requirements, and local audit fees had been reducing over a long period. 98% of those bodies eligible opted into the national scheme and attracted very competitive bids from audit firms. The resulting audit contracts took effect from 1 April 2018.

During 2018 a series of financial crises and failures in the private sector year led to questioning about the role of auditors and the focus and value of their work. Four independent reviews were commissioned by Government: Sir John Kingman's review of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), the audit regulator; the Competition and Markets Authority review of the audit market; Sir Donald Brydon's review of the quality and effectiveness of audit; and Sir Tony Redmond's review of local authority financial reporting and external audit. The recommendations are now under consideration by Government, with the clear implication that significant reforms will follow. A new audit regulator (ARGA) is to be established, and arrangements for system leadership in local audit are to be introduced. Further change will follow as other recommendations are implemented.

The Kingman review has led to an urgent drive for the FRC to deliver rapid, measurable improvements in audit quality. This has created a major pressure for audit firms to ensure full compliance with regulatory requirements and expectations in every audit they undertake. By the time firms were conducting 2018/19 local audits during 2019, the measures they were putting in place to respond to a more focused regulator were clearly visible. To deliver the necessary improvements in audit quality, firms were requiring their audit teams to undertake additional work to gain deeper levels of assurance. However, additional work requires more time, posing a threat to the firms' ability to complete all their audits by the target date for publication of audited accounts. Delayed opinions are not the only consequence of the FRC's drive to improve audit quality. Additional audit work must also be paid for. As a result, many more fee variation claims have been needed than in prior years.

This situation has been accentuated by growing auditor recruitment and retention challenges, the complexity of local government financial statements and increasing levels of technical challenges as bodies explore innovative ways of developing new or enhanced income streams to help fund services for local people. These challenges have increased in subsequent audit years, with Covid-19 creating further significant pressure for finance and audit teams.

None of these problems is unique to local government audit. Similar challenges have played out in other sectors, where increased fees and disappointing responses to tender invitations have been experienced during the past two years.

7 The next audit procurement

The prices submitted by bidders through the procurement will be the key determinant of the value of audit fees paid by opted-in bodies. PSAA will:

- seek to encourage realistic fee levels and to benefit from the economies of scale associated with procuring on behalf of a significant number of bodies.
- continue to pool scheme costs and charge fees to opted-in bodies in accordance with the published fee scale as amended following consultations with scheme members and other interested parties (pooling means that everyone within the scheme will benefit from the prices secured via a competitive procurement process – a key tenet of the national collective scheme).

- continue to minimise its own costs, around 4% of scheme costs, and as a not-for-profit company will return any surplus funds to scheme members. In 2019 it returned a total £3.5million to relevant bodies and in 2021 a further £5.6million was returned.

PSAA will seek to encourage market sustainability in its procurement. Firms will be able to bid for a variety of differently sized contracts so that they can match their available resources and risk appetite to the contract for which they bid. They will be required to meet appropriate quality standards and to reflect realistic market prices in their tenders, informed by the scale fees and the supporting information provided about each audit. Where regulatory changes are in train which affect the amount of audit work suppliers must undertake, firms will be informed as to which developments should be priced into their bids.

The scope of a local audit is fixed. It is determined by the Code of Audit Practice (currently published by the National Audit Office)¹, the format of the financial statements (specified by CIPFA/LASAAC) and the application of auditing standards regulated by the FRC. These factors apply to all local audits irrespective of whether an eligible body decides to opt into PSAA's national scheme or chooses to make its own separate arrangements. The requirements are mandatory; they shape the work auditors undertake and have a bearing on the actual fees required.

There are currently nine audit providers eligible to audit local authorities and other relevant bodies under local audit legislation. This means that a local procurement exercise would seek tenders from the same firms as the national procurement exercise, subject to the need to manage any local independence issues. Local firms cannot be invited to bid. Local procurements must deliver the same audit scope and requirements as a national procurement, reflecting the auditor's statutory responsibilities.

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Annual Governance Statement 2020 - 2021

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 2 November 2021

Report of: Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

- The purpose of this report is for the Committee to receive and approve the proposed final Annual Governance Statement 2020-2021 ('AGS') for signature by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. Once approved the AGS will accompany the Statement of Accounts and be published on the Council's website.
 - A draft of the Statement was brought to this Committee on the 30th September. It was noted that a list of questions had recently been sent to the Head of Legal Services to answer in respect of the Statement and that a response to these would be presented in the form of a revised Statement to this Committee.
 - In consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee, minor amendments have been made to the AGS since the last meeting. In addition, the Statement's action plan has been prioritised, and action owners and completion dates added. In advance of this Committee, Members have been sent a tracked changed version of the original statement to make clear of any changes made.
-

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

Contact officer Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer
lharrison@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

That the Committee approve the updated annual governance statement set out in Appendix A.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duty to adopt an annual governance statement. In addition, to enable officers to focus on the preparation of next year's statement.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the AGS should be approved by Members of the Council meeting, or by a Committee, at the same time as the Statement of Accounts is approved.
- 1.2. This Committee has delegated authority to approve the Council's AGS each year. It is then submitted to the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council to sign.
- 1.3. A draft of the 2020-2021 Statement was brought to this Committee on the 30th September. It was noted that a list of questions had been sent to the Head of Legal Services on the day of the Committee meeting to answer in respect of the Statement, and that a response to these would be given in the form of a revised Statement at the next Committee meeting.
- 1.4. A small number of changes have been made to that draft document in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee. For example, prioritising the actions in the Statement's action plan and adding action owners and completion dates. Only high priority actions have been included in the action plan.
- 1.5. No additional items have been included as significant governance issues in updating the AGS from draft to proposed final, following the discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair. Also, no further comments have been received from the Internal and External Auditors.
- 1.6. Members of the Committee have been sent a tracked changed version of the original statement to make clear the changes made.
- 1.7. The updated Statement is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.8. The previous version of the Statement, brought to this Committee in September, can also be found online.¹ The September report also includes further background on the Statement.
- 1.9. Once approved and signed, the AGS will be published on the Council's website, along with the Statement of Accounts, for members of the public,

¹ See, *Annual Governance Statement 2020/21*, Audit & Scrutiny Committee Thursday, 30 September 2021. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s4401/Annual%20Governance%20Statement%202020%21.pdf> [Last accessed 12/10/2021].

Members, Officers and other stakeholders to view. Further progress reports on items recognised in the Annual Governance Statement will be provided to this Committee as part of its work programme.

2. Other options considered

2.1. The drafting and publication of the Statement is a statutory requirement.

3. Key implications

3.1. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

The Chief Finance Officer is completely supportive of the Annual Governance Statement as identified in the attached. There are no direct financial implications.

3.2. Comments of the Head of Legal Services

Completion and approval of the AGS is required by Regulation 6(1) (b) of the Accounts and Audit England Regulations 2015. Within the Regulations, and in accordance with defined 'proper practice', there is a mandatory requirement to publish an AGS. The AGS, attached at Appendix A, if approved and signed will form part of the Statement of Accounts. Failure to comply would result in the Council not meeting its statutory requirements.

3.3. Equality

The draft Annual Governance Statement references the Council's key HR policies and procedures relevant to equalities and diversity.

3.4. Climate change

There are no direct climate change implications arising from the Annual Governance Statement.

4. Appendices

Appendix 'A' - Annual Governance Statement

5. Background papers

None. However, the previous version of the 2020-2021 Statement has been cited in Section 1.6, footnote 1.

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Annual Governance Statement

Year ending 31 March 2021

Tandridge District Council

1. Purpose

Tandridge District Council is responsible for ensuring a sound system of governance, making sure its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used, and it exercises its functions with regard to a combination of economy efficiency and effectiveness.

This statement sets out the Council's governance arrangements, describing actions taken in 2020-2021 to improve governance and identifying further actions which the Council will take in the year 2021-2022. In line with guidance issued by CIPFA in February 2021 "Application of the Good Governance Framework 2020-2021" this statement includes specific commentary around the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the Council's governance and financial arrangements.

The Financial Management Code (FM Code) sets out the principles by which authorities should be guided in managing their finances. It is up to each authority to determine the extent to which it complies with the FM Code and to identify what action it may wish to take to better meet the standards that the FM Code sets out.

2021-2022 will be the first full compliance year for the FM Code. Work on implementation of the code will be undertaken as part of the Tandridge Finance Transformation (TFT) Programme which is integral to the new Joint Working Agreement with the County. This review will consider how the Council's existing processes will meet the new FM code standards during 2021-2022.

The statement and attached action plan describe the actions taken in 2020-2021 to deliver corporate improvement, and the Council's response to Covid-19 which created additional significant challenges. It also includes the Council's annual internal audit opinion, which for this year is 'Limited'. This means significant gaps and areas for improvement have been identified. Clearly this result falls short of the standards the Council sets for itself but does reflect the challenges it has faced over the last year. The following sections of this statement and the action plan, demonstrate how the Council is addressing its areas for improvement going forward.

The statement meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, regulation 6(b), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an Annual Governance Statement alongside the statutory annual statement of accounts. The previous Statement was informed by a self-assessment which the Council carried out in September 2020 against the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework:

Delivering good governance in local government (2016).¹ Given that the assessment was comprehensive, the Statement agreed in November 2020, and that the associated action plan is updated in this report, a further self-assessment is not necessary at this time. A similar process will be undertaken as the new Programme Management Officer begins updating the draft Code of Corporate Governance for the Council in 2021-2022.

The Head of Legal Services, in her role as the Council’s Monitoring Officer, has been closely involved in the preparation, review and publication of this statement.

2. The Council and how it operates

The Council operates a committee system of governance and comprises of 42 Councillors across 20 wards. Since May 2021 the Leader of the Council is Councillor Catherine Sayer, who is also Chair of Planning Policy Committee.

Following elections in May / June 2021 the composition of the Council is:

Independents and OLRG Alliance	16
Conservative	14
Liberal Democrat	9
Independent Group	3

The Council is in No Overall Control, with a minority Independents and OLRG Alliance administration.

Before the May 2021 elections the composition of the Council was as follows:

Conservative	14
Independents and OLRG Alliance	13
Liberal Democrat	9
Independent Group	3

During 2020-2021 the Council had the following committees:

- Community Services
- Housing
- Licensing
- Overview and Scrutiny / Audit and Scrutiny
- Planning
- Planning Policy
- Standards
- Strategy and Resources

¹ Tandridge District Council (2020) *Appendix B - Tandridge DC self-assessment against the CIPFA/ SOLACE framework, Delivering good governance in local government*, Audit & Scrutiny Committee 29th September. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s1545/Appendix%20B%20for%20Annual%20Governance%20Statement.pdf> [Last accessed 13/08/2021].

The committees are all politically balanced so there is cross-party involvement in decision-making. The committees are responsible for policy formulation and this is reflected in their terms of reference.

During 2020-2021 the Council spent £62m in running the services for which it is responsible, of which £14m was spent within the Housing Revenue Account. There was also £11m invested in a range of capital projects and programmes. These figures match those within the Statement of Account and Outturn. See Section 8 for more information on the Council's financial performance.

The Council is responsible for the administration of the election process at national, county, district and parish / village council level. Elections were not held in 2020-2021 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, they did take place in May 2021 which led to an intake of new Councillors. A comprehensive induction and training programme for new and returning Councillors is in progress and this will continue to be built upon throughout a Councillor's term, with various training sessions to ensure they are fully equipped to fulfil their roles. Democratic Services are involved in this and welcome the opportunity to provide targeted training for Councillors throughout the year.

During the period 2020-2021 the Acting Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) was Elaine Jackson to October 2020, who was replaced by Jackie King (November 2020 – June 2021). Following an external recruitment process, we welcomed a new Chief Executive, David Ford, in June 2021.

The Chief Executive is the Council's chief policy adviser, with overall corporate management and operational responsibility. Along with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), his role is to implement the plans and policies which support the strategic direction of the Council as set by Councillors. He leads the ELT, which includes:

- Executive Head of Corporate Resources
- Executive Head of Communities
- Chief Financial Officer & Section 151 Officer
- Chief Planning Officer
- Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

The roles of the Chief Executive (as Head of Paid Service), the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer are defined within Section 4 of the Council's Constitution.² The Executive Role of Councillors is defined within Section 3 of the Council's Constitution.

Officers manage the day-to-day business of the Council, implementing decisions taken through committees, sub-committees and Full Council. New arrangements were put in place during 2020-2021 to ensure appropriate departmental, project and programme governance (see Section 5).

² Tandridge District Council (2021) *Tandridge District Council Constitution – August 2021*. Online available: <https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Your-council/Councillors-and-committees/How-the-Council-is-run/Constitution.pdf?ver=2021-08-09-155655-133> [Last accessed 13/08/2021].

During the period 2020-2021, the Council's "Strategic Plan: 2020/2021 – 2023/2024" was agreed.³ The plan sets out the Council's key priorities over the coming period (see Section 12 below).

The Council's annual revenue and capital budgets are considered and approved by Full Council in February each year. This sets the level of council tax and capital investment for the forthcoming financial year.

3. The Council's governance framework – how we ensure arrangements are effective

The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these procedures are required by law, while others are for the Council to determine. It also sets out decisions reserved to committees and those delegated to Officers. The Constitution includes:

- Contract standing orders and delegations and approval levels for financial matters.
- Councillors' Code of Conduct.
- Protocols for planning and the Councillor/ Officer Code of Conduct⁴

There is also an action in the plan below to consider an ongoing process to review the constitution, potentially supported by a Councillor led Constitution Working Group.

Our committees each have distinct terms of reference. Meetings are held in public, apart from agenda items that are exempt under legislative guidance,⁵ and members of the public may ask questions.

Our committee meetings are webcast and publicised on the Council's website. Zoom and Microsoft Teams were promptly rolled out in May 2020 to allow Officers and Councillors to communicate effectively. Council and Committee Meetings continued online until the 7 May 2021. The setting up of remote meetings was facilitated by the Council's IT and Democratic Services. This included Full Council in May 2020 to agree a series of changes to the Constitution and standing orders to allow committees to operate remotely.

While meetings were held remotely, the proceedings were livestreamed for public viewing via a link on the Council's website.

³ Tandridge District Council (2020) *Strategic Plan 2020/2021 – 2023/2024 (v1.0 July 2020)*. Online available: https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Your-council/Strategic%20Plan/Strategic_plan%20v1.0%20July%202020.pdf?ver=2020-09-04-105655-203 [Last accessed 13/08/2021].

⁴ At the time of writing, an updated Code of Conduct was being reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team.

⁵ For confidentiality of proceedings, see Tandridge District Council (2021) *Tandridge District Council Constitution*, p. 13 'No. 16'. Online available: <https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Your-council/Councillors-and-committees/How-the-Council-is-run/Constitution.pdf?ver=2021-08-09-155655-133> [Last accessed 17/09/2021].

There are internal controls in place to ensure the Council is operating effectively and that priorities/objectives are being achieved. At a corporate level, internal controls relate to our Internal Audit service (Section 10), performance and risk framework (Section 5) and Corporate Improvement Board.

Internal Audit and the Corporate Improvement Board identify the principal risks to the Council meeting its key priorities and actions to enhance governance. Resultant actions are corporately monitored via two action trackers: the internal audit management action tracker, and the Corporate Improvement Plan.

The Corporate Improvement Plan is in the process of being reviewed as responsibility has been transferred from external consultants to an internal Officer. The aims of the review are to align the plan with the internal audit tracker, reflect the Council's current priorities and incorporate actions from this statement.

This will serve to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring and reporting and help underpin the robustness of the statements made within the Annual Governance Statement. It is also in place to provide a framework for the annual assessment of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements operating within the Council. This includes robust challenge by the Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Statutory Officers the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Leadership Team.

The Council is required to appoint a **Monitoring Officer** (see section 9 below) to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution and to ensure its aims and principles are achieved. The Monitoring Officer keeps the Constitution under continual review, having delegated powers to make amendments arising from organisational changes and legal requirements and to correct errors. Other amendments are recommended by the Strategy and Resources Committee for decision by Full Council.

The Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Chief Financial Officer meet weekly as the statutory Officers to discuss services delivery improvements. Such improvements are shared with the ELT at their bi-monthly meetings, and the Corporate Improvement Board (Section 11). Any actions to be pursued will be added to the Corporate Improvement Plan. Each officer carries a statutory responsibility to report issues to the Council. The monitoring officer produces an annual report to the Standards Committee, the CFO presents regular budget monitoring reports, and the Chief Executive will compose exception reports to Strategy & Resources Committee as necessary. As such, the posts remain pivotal to the Council's good governance. During the initial stages of the pandemic this group met also weekly to discuss any emergency decision making.

During 2020-2021 the **Audit and Scrutiny Committee**⁶ had responsibility for the review and scrutiny of the decisions and performance of the Council and audit arrangements. The Committee met five times and at its meetings considered:

- Changes to its terms of reference.
- External auditing of the Council's accounts.
- Internal audit plans, progress and charter.
- The Annual Governance Statement.
- The Council's finance improvement plan.
- Council's whistleblowing policy.
- Performance and risks of the policy committees.
- The Corporate Improvement Plan.
- Community safety.
- Anti-Fraud Bribery and Corruption Policy.

The Council does not currently have an adopted code of corporate governance to set out all the elements of its governance systems. Audit & Scrutiny Committee reviewed the draft in January 2021. Updating and completing this will be a priority for 2021-2022. In addition to those set out above, the following elements have been identified as being in place for the year 2020-2021:

- Internal and external audit, implementation of recommendations.
- Compliance with laws, regulations, internal policies and procedures.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- Production of a statement of accounts.
- Complaints policy.
- Local Government Ombudsman reports.
- HR policies, procedures, conditions of service and Officer Code of Conduct.
- Equality and diversity scheme.
- Budgetary control.
- Procurement procedures and standard terms of contract.
- Whistleblowing and other countering fraud and bribery arrangements.
- Performance appraisal.
- Councillor and Officer induction and development programmes.
- Audit and Scrutiny Committee (acting as the local Crime and Disorder Committee).

Under the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020, temporary standing orders for remote meeting procedure rules were in place from May 2020 to 7 May 2021, and all Committee Meetings were held remotely during that period using video conferencing to run and livestream proceedings. The Council's annual

⁶ This committee was previously known as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its terms of reference were changed on 22/10/20 when Council ratified the relevant recommendation from the 30/07/20 Overview and Scrutiny meeting. The aim of the switch was to enable the committee to be more explicit regarding its 'overall responsibility for audit and governance frameworks'.

meeting in 2020 was cancelled, with existing member appointments remaining in place until the annual meeting in May 2021.

The Council's **contract standing orders** (part D of the constitution, updated in January 2021) require that all contracts over £100,000 include consideration of wider social / wellbeing, environmental and economic benefits, in line with the Social Value Act 2012. A process of annual review of the standing orders has now been instigated. Leaving the European Union was largely overshadowed by the Covid-19 crisis. While the government outlined significant changes to public procurement regulations in the Queen's speech, these are unlikely to be enacted until 2022. The only substantive change was to replace OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) notices with 'Find a Tender Service' (FaTS) notices.

The Council's **complaints** processes were revised by the Communications and Customer Experience Team in 2019-2020. Complaint responses and times are now reviewed on a fortnightly basis by ELT and SLT. The number of complaints and FOIs (response times) are now reported quarterly to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

If a complaint about an Officer was upheld following investigation, the Council would take action in line with the Disciplinary Policy, which forms part of the conditions of service. Compliance with mandatory staff training is monitored by the HR Team. The Council supports Officers health and wellbeing through occupational health services and the Employee Assistance Programme.

The Council fully supports the requirements to ensure that both Councillors and Officers have the necessary skill sets to fulfil their strategic role in the organisation. The Council continues to invest in development for Officers.

The draft Annual Governance Statement has been considered by the Council's Senior Management Team (ELT and SLT) assurances have been provided by them that any actions on the Action Plan will be completed and any further weaknesses will be identified and addressed. The Programme Management Officer will seek to enhance the arrangements in the coming year.

The Council recognises that effective governance requires both that appropriate processes are in place, and that there is an organisational culture which supports consistent understanding of and compliance with the principles and processes of good governance.

Through the development of values and behaviours for Councillors and Officers, and further training, the Council will continue to develop the organisational culture with this aim during 2021-2022.

4. Partnership governance

The Council continues to seek new partnership opportunities to support efficiency and effectiveness.

The Council has entered partnerships for the delivery of the following services in the District:

- **Environmental Health** – Mole Valley District Council and Tandridge District Council have operated a shared Environmental Health and Licensing service to protect residents and support businesses since April 2017. Mole Valley operates as the host authority for the delivery of the service. Each Council retains its licensing and regulatory committees and sub-committees. The Environmental Health Partnership is run through an inter-authority agreement which includes details of the Principles of the Shared Service, governance and monitoring. The Joint Partnership Board meets quarterly.
- **Building Control** – the Council hosts the Southern Building Control service, a partnership which includes Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and Mole Valley District Council. The partnership is governed by an inter-authority agreement, which is currently under review. A board, on which the councils are represented by Councillors and Officers, meets quarterly to review income, performance and risk.
- **Internal Audit** - the Southern Internal Audit Partnership has a key Stakeholder Board, in accordance with the Partnership Agreement. The Council's Chief Financial Officer sits on this Board, which exists to discuss all areas of performance, professional practice, and sharing best practice.
- **Finance function** – in March 2021, the Strategy & Resources Committee approved the Joint Working Agreement with Surrey County Council for Tandridge's Finance Function. This was to address the issues of recruitment of a new S151 Officer and enhancing the resilience of the Finance team. At the heart of this Joint Agreement is the Tandridge Finance Transformation Programme (TFT). The arrangement is comprised of three phases concluded through a gateway process. Phase 1 was due diligence and completed in June, phase 2 is the delivery of the TFT due to conclude in April 2022 and phase 3 is a key gateway which will determine future options.

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Act 1998 and the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 requires "responsible authorities" to work together to reduce crime and disorder in their area. The Council was part of the East Surrey Community Safety Partnership until 2020. This partnership was formed of four councils – Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge. It was mutually decided to separate and form district/borough specific community safety partnership board.

Tandridge Community Safety Partnership Board was formally established in January 2021 and meets quarterly. The board is attended by partner agencies including Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue, Police and Crime Commissioners office, Community Safety – Surrey County Council, Tandridge Voluntary Action, Surrey Heartlands CCG, a county Councillor and a Tandridge District Councillor. Priorities and an action plan have been agreed.

The Council chairs and administers the Tandridge Health and Wellbeing Board. The purpose of the Board is to provide a collaborative approach to improving the health and wellbeing of residents and reducing health inequalities across Tandridge. Following the April 2021 meeting the Board reviewed its terms of reference, objectives and membership. The Board looks to understand what residents would like and the key challenges for health, education and the local authority.

The Board's objectives include monitoring and developing provision of local health and wellbeing services, escalating significant gaps in service and drawing out the local links, to the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board and the Council's own strategies. It also assesses, on an annual basis, the applications and agrees funding for local health and wellbeing projects via the Tandridge Together Lottery and the Tandridge Small Grants Fund.

The Council made a commitment in February 2020 to establish its own Climate Change Action Plan, with targets to cut its environmental impact and steps to become carbon neutral by 2030.⁷ The Council approved its action plan in November 2020,⁸ and has since worked hard to progress key priority actions, despite limited resources. For example, the Council has committed to build net-zero (operational) new homes, to provide efficient heating systems in Council homes, report on its emissions, and scope installing electric vehicle charging points.

It is a core corporate priority for the Council. Officers work closely with the county council and the other Surrey districts and boroughs on climate change related issues, via an Officers group. The group explores opportunities to share data, resources and knowledge on specific climate change topics. The group is hosted by Surrey County Council and meets monthly.

5. Performance and risk management and reporting

The Council utilises a corporate risk management framework to record identified risks and the mitigation that will be taken to manage them. Risks are regularly reviewed and there is an escalation process for the most significant risks, which ensures that senior management and Councillors are aware of those risks that pose the most serious threat to the Council and how they are being managed. All reports are published on the Council's website under each committee.

The performance framework entails the council monitoring a set of performance indicators across all its service areas. Service managers upload their performance data monthly/quarterly to a central repository, where the

⁷ Tandridge District Council (2020) *Council Agenda 13th February 2020*, page 5. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Full%20Council/202002131930/Agenda/Council%20Book%2013%20Feb%202020.pdf> [Last accessed 13/08/2021].

⁸ Tandridge District Council (2020) Agenda and minutes for Strategy & Resources Committee 24th Nov 2020, see S191 "Climate Change Action Plan Report". Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=137&MIId=906&Ver=4> [Last accessed 13/08/2021].

data is transferred to a central database from which performance charts can be generated. As part of their data submission, managers also provide short written commentaries to explain the figures in relation to set targets. Managers are asked to propose any changes to their indicators and/or targets annually during Quarter 3.

During 2020-2021, the policy committees (Planning Policy, Strategy and Resources, Community Services and Housing) received individual reports providing updates on the delivery of key service performance indicators and risks relevant to their committee. Each committee reviewed their standard of set key performance indicators in the Quarter 3 reports. Budget monitoring reports were also brought to the policy committees.

In 2020-2021, departmental leadership team meetings started to meet again with a clear remit to regularly monitor and manage performance, budgets, risk and project/programme monitoring. The ELT receive monthly performance and corporate risk reports. As the performance and risk framework becomes more embedded in 2021-2022 the Chief Executive will hold each ELT member to account to deliver service performance to an acceptable standard. Furthermore, in 2021-2022 fraud risk assessments will be carried out and fraud and irregularity audited by SIAP.

Key performance indicators are benchmarked quarterly across Surrey districts and boroughs and shared with Surrey Chief Executives quarterly.

The Council conducts a biannual Residents' Survey, most recently in July and August 2021.⁹ The findings of the previous survey, considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2019, show 84% of respondents are satisfied with the area as a place to live and 59% with the way the Council runs things. 35% agree the Council provides value for money, while 34% neither agree nor disagree. 69% think the Council keeps them well informed and 56% trust the Council.

6. Managing the risk of fraud, bribery and corruption

The Council is committed to the proper accountability of public funds. Its **Anti-Fraud Strategy Statement** is included within the Constitution (Part F) and includes:

- The Council's expectations of Councillors and its employees.
- Definitions and relevant examples of fraud.
- The approach that should be taken to reporting and concerns or suspicions relating to fraudulent or corrupt activity (including reference to the confidential anti-fraud and corruption telephone line, operated in accordance with the Public Interest and Disclosure Act 1998).

⁹ Tandridge District Council (2019) Residents' Survey 2019 Results, Overview & Scrutiny Committee 5th November. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Overview%20&%20Scrutiny%20Committee/201911051930/Agenda/O+S%20Cttee%20agenda%2005.11.19.pdf> [Last accessed 13/08/21].

The Council has additionally adopted a Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Support anti-fraud policy (2016), and Anti-Money Laundering guidelines (2017).

The Council has an Anti-fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy in place which sets out its arrangements for dealing with fraud and corruption. This was revised and updated in March 2021. The policy now strengthens and improve the Council's overall arrangements for the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud, bribery and corruption. The policy also provides guidance on how any individual can report any suspected fraudulent or corrupt activity.

The Council's Whistleblowing Policy, contained within Officers' conditions of service, was reviewed and updated in January 2021. The policy covers any malpractice or wrongdoing by any Councillor or employee of the Council, as well as any contractor, supplier, consultant or partner of the Council in the course of their work. The Monitoring Officer has a duty to write an annual report to update Councillors, report will be brought to Audit & Scrutiny Committee March 2022.

The Council's standard form of contract includes provisions to ensure compliance with the Bribery Act 2020. The Council provides an e-learning course on Fraud awareness, and the Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22 includes Fraud & Irregularity.

The **Officers' Code of Conduct** (2015, contained within Conditions of Service) states Officers may not accept money, loans or significant personal gifts from contactors and outside suppliers, residents or tenants or any other professional business contact.

Hospitality may only be accepted where council representation is required, subject to Chief Officer / Head of Service approval. Officers are also required to register any personal or financial interest which may result in a conflict. The Executive Team are in the process of reviewing the code, which once agreed will be shared with Officers.

7. Information governance and Freedom of Information

Information governance is the overall process of analysing, evaluating, assessing and mitigating the impact of risks to the Council's information and information systems. This includes physical, personnel and information security.

Information governance policies and standards are in place which, if complied with by Officers and Councillors, provide the necessary assurance about the security of the Council's information assets and data handling procedures. In line with the Local Public Services Data Handling Guidelines 2008 and the Local Public Services Data Handling Guidelines 2012:

- The Monitoring Officer is the Senior Information Risk Owner (responsible for taking ownership of the Council's information governance policy and strategy).
- Executive Heads running each directorate are Information Asset Owners (responsible for understanding and addressing risks to the information they

own and providing assurance to the Senior Information Risk Owner on the security and use of those assets.

The Council must comply with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and Data Protection Act 2018. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has taken no enforcement action for non-compliance. No fines were imposed because of weak controls. We continue to improve and learn lessons from mistakes to protect the data that we use.

The Council ensures that Officers handling personal data are trained to an appropriate level in the use and control of personal data. All Officers must undertake e-learning on protecting information. While Covid has seen an increase in the support needed for support on Data Protection across the Council, it has not impacted on the numbers of data breaches/incidents that meet the criteria for reporting to the ICO.

These remain low and anything previously reported has been closed by the ICO without action or penalty as there have been appropriate mitigating controls in place such as encrypted devices as well as a full process to report and review incidents. Regular reporting to the Senior Information Risk Officer is in place and there are regular reports to the Information Governance Board. This Board meets quarterly, chaired by the Data Protection Officer, to oversee the Council's work in relation to Information Governance and GDPR/data protection.

The Council has recently appointed a new Data Protection Officer who will help to establish some improved practices to ensure focus is placed on continuing improvement and learning.

The Council has a statutory duty to respond to all Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within 20 days. During 2020-2021, 638 FOI requests were received, 81% of which were responded to within the deadline.

Cyber-attack is recognised as a key risk to the Council. Revised guidance from the UK government now states this is amongst the biggest emerging threats to the UK and alongside terrorism and the pandemic is among the key dangers to UK security. The volumes of cyber-attack keep increasing and the cyber-attack capabilities are continually evolving, so this is an area which needs constant vigilance and a continuous improvement approach. The Council has agreed to an online cyber security training course, that would be compulsory for all Officers.

8. Chief Financial Officer Assurance Statement

The post of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and s151 is a statutory post, responsible for delivering and overseeing the financial management arrangements of the Council. The interim role has been held by Anna D'Alessandro since July 2020. The Council can confirm that it complies with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the role of the CFO in Local Government.

The CFO has been involved in reviewing the corporate governance arrangements of the Council and the preparation of this Statement. The CFO considers that the arrangements are working satisfactorily, subject to areas for improvement identified in the body of this report and in the action plan attached to this statement.

Over the last three financial years the Council has faced an increasingly challenging financial position with overspends and a constantly reducing level of General Fund Reserves. 2020-2021 is no exception. The Council has made a concerted effort to contain spend and considerable time and effort has been invested in gripping the Council's salary costs as they represent the largest component of the Council's budget. An HR and Finance Panel (the CFO and the Executive Head of Resources¹⁰) meets weekly to assess requests regarding additional or continuation of agency/temporary posts.

At Month 11 the Council posted a surplus position. However, while undertaking work on the Outturn Report, it became apparent there was a significant imbalance in the 2020-2021 budget of c£920k. After an internal investigation which did not provide the answers required, Grant Thornton LLP UK was engaged to undertake a forensic review.¹¹

The findings and the Council's response were reported to a Special Strategy & Resources Committee and a later meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee in September.¹² As a result of this review the 2020-2021 Outturn has not yet been reported to Committee for approval. A surplus position is still anticipated for 2020-2021.

The budget for 2021-2022 was approved by Full Council in February 2021. The budget was balanced but was predicated on the delivery of a £2.7m savings programme. This, plus the delivery of base budgets across the Council, will be critical to ensuring the 2021-2022 budget is delivered as planned. This is even more critical given the potential budget gap discussed above.

As a result of the Customer First Programme the organisation, including the Finance team, has been working with considerably constrained capacity. The interim CFO/s151 is making improvements to the finance function and processes (largely through the TFT Programme, to take effect in 2021-2022) including financial reporting to senior management and Councillors.

During 2020-2021 the CFO put in place an ambitious Finance Improvement Plan to address in-year overspends and then set a balanced budget for 2021-2022 and into the medium-term. Delivery of these improvements have been

¹⁰ From August 2021 the CFO meets with the Chief Executive as the post of Executive Head of Corporate Resources was vacant from this date.

¹¹ For the report, see minutes of Strategy & Resources Committee - Tuesday, 14th September, 2021 7.00 pm. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=137&MIId=1065&Ver=4> [Last accessed 11/10/2021].

¹² See *Strategy & Resources Committee - Tuesday, 14th September, 2021 7.00 pm*. At the time of writing, agenda and reports available online: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=137&MIId=1065&Ver=4> [Last accessed 17/09/2021].

critical to ensure the Council is financially resilient over the short to medium-term, without having to rely on a dangerously low level of reserves to balance the budget next year.

Key elements of the Plan (including arrangements for increased accountability for expenditure, greater clarity of reporting and oversight of internal audit reports) are reflected in the action plan which appears at the end of this statement.

The Council has approved a four-year Capital and Investment Strategy which provides a framework of control within which capital investment plans are financed and delivered and supporting prioritised projects and programmes to enable delivery of the Council's strategic plan.

This overarching strategy is aligned with the Commercial Property Investment Strategy for the acquisition and disposal of commercial property assets with the aim of producing a positive return for the Council. This framework sets out the governance, risk assessment, investment evaluation criteria and acquisition and disposal procedures.

The Council has also approved an annual Treasury Management Strategy which ensures that the cashflow of the Council is planned, that cash is available when needed and where surplus funds are available they are invested with counterparties or within instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite. The Strategy also sets out the Council's approach to planning its borrowing to meet longer term capital spending obligations.

Gryllus Holdings Ltd, with its subsidiary companies Gryllus Housing Ltd and Gryllus Property Ltd, is a Local Authority Trading Company, the Council being the only shareholder. Gryllus' purpose is to acquire property, investment and development stock covering land, residential, retail, industrial and office premises to generate income and capital to support Council services.

The Council's shareholder function is delegated to the Treasury and Investment Sub Committee, which reports to the Strategy and Resources Committee. All decisions to purchase properties and commit funds for development are made by the Sub-Committee. The day-to-day business and affairs of the property company and any sub companies, joint ventures and/or special purpose vehicles are managed by and under the direction of the Board of Gryllus Holdings Ltd (the Council's Executive Head of Communities, the Lead Finance Specialist and Finance Specialist).

9. Monitoring Officer Assurance Statement

The post of Monitoring Officer is a statutory post. The Monitoring Officer ensures that the Council acts within legal and statutory requirements. This is achieved through the provision of frontline legal advice to Council services on a daily basis, the active participation of the Monitoring Officer within the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the active participation of Legal Services in the preparation and consideration of legal implications arising from Committee reports for decision.

The Annual Governance Statement builds upon those of previous years. Although some progress has been made in dealing with some of the governance issues included in last year's statement, there are some actions that have not been implemented in accordance with the original timescales and this is an action that will continue to be monitored.

The Monitoring Officer is also responsible, among other things, for maintaining the register of Councillors' interests, dealing with complaints where Councillors have breached the Councillors' Code of Conduct and has a statutory duty to report findings of maladministration established by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) to the Council. LGSCO closed their service to new complainants at the beginning of the initial Covid-19 lockdown, to enable councils the opportunity to deal with more urgent matters arising from the pandemic.

The LGSCO produces an Annual Review Letter in July each year for each council in which it publishes statistics relating to enquiries/complaints made about them to the ombudsman. This update will be reported to the Standards Committee annually. This data is uploaded to an interactive map, which gives people the chance to see how their local authority is performing at the click of a button. The map collates the annual letters the ombudsman sends to each local authority, how often they have complied with ombudsman recommendations, the improvements they have agreed to implement, and published decisions all in one place.¹³ In 2020-2021, 10 complaints were referred to the LGSCO, mainly in relation to housing and planning issues. Of these 1 was upheld, 1 was not upheld and 8 were closed after initial enquiries.¹⁴ All decisions made by the ombudsman are published on the website.¹⁵

The Local Government Association published a Model Councillor Code of Conduct (the Model Code) in December 2020. While much of the substance contained in the Model Code had been captured in the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in 2012 and revised since, the Council believed that a strong message to the public that Councillors were aspiring to best practice were worthwhile benefits for adopting the new Model Code. The Council agreed to adopt the Model Code on 17 March 2021. It is contained in Part F of the Constitution.

The Standards Committee is responsible for assessing and determining complaints against alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct. The role and function of the Committee, is amongst, other things, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted Councillors. The Standards Committee operated as expected throughout 2020-2021.

¹³ See: LGSCO (2021) *Your council's performance*. Online available: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance> [Last accessed 13/08/2021].

¹⁴ See: Tandridge District Council (2021) *Complaints update, S82*. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=147&MIId=1007&Ver=4> [Last accessed 13/08/2021].

¹⁵ LGSCO (2021) *Decisions*. Online available: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/decisions> [Last accessed 13/08/2021].

During 2021-2022 one investigation/ referral will be passed to Standards Committee in relation to the Code of Conduct for elected Councillors of the Council. From time to time the Monitoring Officer deals with other matters referred to her informally, following consultation with the Independent Person. The Monitoring Officer has continued to be available to give advice to individual Councillors regarding Councillor behaviour and conduct concerns and to provide Councillors with advice on possible conflicts of interest. Two deputy monitoring Officers have been recently appointed.

All Council business is conducted in public unless legislation deems it appropriate for it to be considered in private. All meetings of the Council (including the annual meeting) and its committees were postponed from 16 March 2020 until 7 May 2020.

From 7 May 2020 until 6 May 2021 meetings have been held virtually in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Virtual meetings were instigated to ensure transparency and good governance while also facilitating extensive access to the public and press. Despite councils wishing to continue these in 2021-2022, emergency legislation was not extended beyond 7 May 2021. The Council held its first meeting in person on 27 May 2021.

One of the sources of assurance (Statement of Assurance) for the Annual Governance Statement should come from ELT/SLT responsible for the operation, management and monitoring of controls within their area of responsibility. The Statement of Assurance is intended to collect this assurance by covering operational, project and partnership responsibilities as well as the Bribery Act, Safeguarding, RIPA and frauds. The ELT/SLT Officer can highlight concerns and the necessary actions required to improve governance. Once completed their contents are used to inform the governance statement. The Statement of Assurance was circulated and shared with ELT/SLT.

10. Internal and External Audit

The Council's internal (Southern Internal Audit Partnership – SIAP) and external auditors (Deloitte LLP) are the main independent sources of assurance on the operation of our governance framework and the Statement of Accounts.

SIAP operates in accordance with best practice professional standards and guidelines. It independently and objectively reviews, on a continuous basis, the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Council's objectives and contributes to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources. All audit reports are discussed at Executive Team meetings and the Corporate Improvement Board, whereby recommendations are agreed, and outstanding actions are tracked. Councillors receive an annual report of internal audit activity and approve the annual audit plan for the forthcoming year.

The report of the Chief Internal auditor states that the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control for 2020-2021 is 'Limited'. The Council is disappointed with this result, as many improvements to internal controls have been implemented over the last year. However, the Council recognises that there is still some way to go to reach its aim of achieving an overall opinion of 'Reasonable' next year.

As other sections of this statement underline, the Council is prioritising improvements to internal controls and addressing observations noted by SIAP's auditors, despite the external challenges of the last year and managing with very limited resources (both in terms of finance and people) to deliver its services. While the annual opinion is below the standards the Council sets for itself, it does have a clear blueprint to drive improvements over the coming year. Further enhancements to the monitoring, delivery and communication of these actions within the ELT and Senior Leadership Team are also being implemented.

SIAP routinely present progress updates, on the management actions that follow from each audit to Audit & Scrutiny Committee. Each member of the Executive Leadership Team reviews audit reports that relate to their Directorate and since April 2021, they meet as a group to review the management actions at the newly instated Corporate Improvement Board (CIB).

The internal audit plan for 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 was agreed by Audit & Scrutiny Committee in March 2021. For the plan year 2020- 2021, the audits below have been completed and progress update will be provided as a separate item on the agenda for the Committee meeting:¹⁶

- Human Resources & Organisational Development - April 2021 [Reasonable]
- Procurement 2020-2021 – Follow Up - May 2021 [Reasonable]
- Financial Resilience (paused due to Grant Thornton review)
- IT Asset Management - June 2021 [Limited]
- Follow Up of Disaster Recovery & IT Business Continuity Audit - June 2021 [N/A]
- Distribution of Business Grants 2020-2021 - June 2021 [Reasonable]
- Cyber Security - July 2021 [Limited]
- Housing Benefit - July 2021 [Reasonable]
- Treasury Management - July 2021 [Limited]
- Building Control - July 2021 [Limited]
- Information Governance - August 2021 [Limited]
- Health & Safety – August 2021 [No]
- Grants Register 2020-2021 – August 2021 [No]

During 2020-2021, the Acting Chief Executive and other members of the Executive Leadership Team met with the Chief Internal Auditor and Assistant Head of Partnership monthly to review and action recommendations arising from internal audit reports. ELT is very cognisant of the number of limited

¹⁶ Audit opinions are listed in the brackets next to the dates.

assurance audits in 2020-2021 and is working to address these issues through prioritisation and realigning roles and responsibilities. Further discussions are being had as part of the budget setting process to address significant capacity issues in the Council

Internal Audit has also led on a review of the Annual Governance Statement which will enable Councillors of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee to review any next steps that will be needed to enhance the effectiveness of the Annual Governance Statement. Any recommendations will be taken further forward in 2021-2022.

Following a case of Officer fraud, SIAP carried out an audit of Council Tax during 2019-2020 and one of the observations raised within the report related to the processing of refunds and the risk exposure to the Council. Two management actions were put in place to help mitigate that risk in the future.

Our external auditors (Deloitte LLP) will issue their *External Audit Report ISA260 report* for 2020-2021 in September 2021 which will be considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The document will summarise their key findings in relation to their external audit of the Council for 2020-2021 and will contain an opinion on the Council's financial statements, the control environment in place to support the production of timely and accurate financial statements and the Council's significant risk areas

11. Corporate improvement programme

Several corporate improvement initiatives have subsequently taken place, including those from a specific audit on the Customer First change programme. The actions that were completed in 2019-2020 and those listed in the "Annual Governance Statement action plan 2020-2021" can be viewed in the previous Annual Governance Statement.¹⁷ In addition, SIAP provides quarterly progress updates on outstanding audit management actions to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

In March 2021 the additional capacity commissioned from the Local Government Association came to an end, and a new permanent role of Programme Management Officer (PMO) instated. The scope of the new PMO's role includes rationalising and embedding the various corporate improvement work at the Council, such as the actions resulting from the previous Annual Governance Statement and Corporate Improvement Plan and those arising from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny report and internal audit reports. The PMO also oversees corporate performance and risk and programme and project management.

Many actions from the corporate improvement work from 2019-2021 to March 2021 have been completed, and some of the action plans have now been

¹⁷ Tandridge District Council (2020) *Annual Governance Statement - Year ending 31 March 2020*. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s1945/Appendix%20A%20-%20Annual%20Governance%20Statement.pdf> [Last accessed 13/08/2021].

consolidated. Resultantly, the Council now has two key action plans that specifically relate to corporate improvement - the Corporate Improvement Plan and the Internal Audit Action Plan. The former will be reported to Strategy & Resources Committee and the latter is reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee. Both are overseen by the internal Corporate Improvement Board (CIB), which meets monthly.

The outstanding actions from the previous Annual Governance Statement and its attached action plan, have been provided below.

A peer challenge is a supportive but challenging critical friend approach to assist councils and their partners to identify what is going well and where improvements can be made. The Council's Development Management service (Planning) has been peer reviewed by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). The PAS report has been reviewed by senior Officers and Councillors and the Council has now appointed an Officer to lead on formulating improvement plans for the service.

12. The Strategic Plan

During 2019-2020, each committee oversaw delivery of several projects and programmes, which had previously been considered and endorsed by Strategy and Resources Committee and agreed by Full Council.

The development of a Strategic Plan for the Council, setting out priority objectives for delivery which have been agreed by Councillors, was identified as a key action in the corporate improvement plan. The Strategic Plan was agreed by Strategy and Resources Committee in July 2020. As the Council's financial recovery plan is implemented, and the Medium-Term Finance Strategy developed, the Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and further actions identified where possible to achieve priority outcomes. Work is underway to complete a People Plan which will support delivery of the Strategic Plan.

Strategy and Resources Committee oversees the delivery of the Strategic Plan, and it is now monitored by the new Programme Management Officer. Each policy committee received updates relevant to the actions within their remit as part of their quarterly performance and risk reports. An update report will be prepared for Strategy & Resources in 2021-2022.

13. The Council's response to Covid

Specifically highlighted in the 2019-2020 Annual Governance Statement was the impact on Council services of the Covid-19 pandemic. This continued to be a significant risk throughout 2020-2021. Although business as usual had to change, core governance processes and functions have been maintained during the unprecedented shock of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the financial challenges of declining central government resources coupled with significant extra demand for

services. In the financial year 2020-2021 the government provided additional support for the additional costs and income losses resulting from the impact of the pandemic. The Council maintained a log of all spending commitments and income losses to enable full accountability and reported this financial impact monthly to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The various committees received reports at all meetings in 2020-2021, monitoring the impact on Council finances against central government grants.

The pandemic and the resultant imposition of lockdowns have had a fundamental impact on the operation and financial performance of the Council's leisure facilities. Income has reduced, and financial support has been required to keep facilities open.

But despite all the challenges and adaptations in 2020-2021, the Council has maintained consistent essential services for residents, while adapting to provide alternative virtual services wherever possible. The Council's strong collaborative approach has continued to be effective at achieving a unified response, working with key partners in the NHS, police and voluntary and community sectors. In fact, the response to the crisis enabled the Council to test the effectiveness of its business continuity plans, communications strategy and governance arrangements.

Additional demands were made on IT systems with most office-based Officers continuing to work remotely throughout 2020-2021. Changes to ways of working will need careful management as lockdown continues to ease in 2021-2022.

During the pandemic, some urgent decisions were taken by the Acting Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders. Each of these decisions was accompanied by both a report and a decision notice which was reported back to the relevant committee.

From May 2020 to October 2020 the Acting Chief Executive met with all the Group Leaders on a regular basis, to discuss key issues. Agendas and notes for these meetings were prepared.

In addition, weekly Covid-19 statistics demonstrating activity and progress were shared with all Councillors and Officers by the Communications and Customer Experience team. The Council produces a magazine twice a year which is delivered to all residents and businesses. During the pandemic the Council increased its online communication, providing more regular updates to residents and businesses.

The intensity of the Covid response did lessen towards the end of 2020-2021, but the Council's Covid-19 project team remains in place and added resilience to this team has been implemented via a change to relevant Officer reporting lines.

Internal Audit has also reported on the Council's response to the Covid pandemic from a human resources perspective. The assurance opinion was Reasonable, stating that "there is generally a sound system of governance,

risk management and control in place". The actions from two observations made by the auditors have been input into the Council's Internal Audit Action Plan for progress monitoring.

14. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)

The Council has a RIPA Policy which outlines the arrangements for undertaking covert surveillance to gather evidence of illegal activity and to ensure that it is only undertaken where it complies fully with all applicable laws. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and there is a nominated Lead Officer (a Solicitor in Legal Services), Senior Responsible Officer (Head of Legal) and Authorising Officer (ELT members) as stated within the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. RIPA activity will be reported to Strategy and Resources on an annual basis and a revised Policy was approved by the Committee in September 2020. No RIPA authorisations were requested in this financial year.

15. Conclusion

2020-2021 has been another turbulent period for the Council. During that period the Council progressed and completed many corporate improvements. However, several new improvement actions have been identified and some are yet to be completed from the last statement. Covid-19 did slow progress and has caused delays, as the already limited organisational capacity focused on this area of work. There will be an ongoing review of the financial impact, as well as the impact on procedures and processes relating to the emergency.

The sections above highlight how monitoring of governance actions is being enhanced over the next statement period and reporting will continue to be brought to Audit & Scrutiny Committee. On a day-to-day basis, improvement actions will continue to be monitored by the PMO and the Monitoring Officer.

The annual audit opinion for this year (Section 10) indicates that there are key areas of improvement within the council's systems of internal control and governance. As the demands of Covid lessen, new governance arrangements progress and become more embedded, and the Council pro-actively adapts to its limited resourcing and capacity, greater levels of corporate improvement are expected over 2021-2022.

The Council's 2021-2022 action plan (below) reflects both actions already completed in the previous Statement period, and those which will be progressed over the next year.

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Certification

As Leader and Chief Executive, we have been advised on the results of the review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework. Our overall assessment is that this Annual Governance Statement is a balanced reflection

of the governance environment and the arrangements as defined in this statement have been effectively operating during the year with the exception of those areas identified within the action plan.

We are also satisfied that over the coming year, the Council will take appropriate steps to address any significant governance issues and we will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review

****SIGNATURE****

Councillor Catherine Sayer
Leader of the Council

****SIGNATURE****

David Ford
Chief Executive

16. Action Plan Update

The first table in this section documents the actions completed against the 2020-2021 Plan set out in last year's AGS and the second table contains an Action Plan for 2021-2022 for those actions not completed in 2020-2021 and any new actions deemed necessary.

Actions completed against the 2020-2021 Action Plan

Issue identified	Completed in 2020-2021
<p>Audit Increased Member oversight and management control of audit recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A renewed focus on Internal Audit reporting into the newly constituted Audit and Scrutiny Committee and day-to-day reporting into the Chief Financial Officer. • Adopt an internal audit plan, with each item owned by the relevant ELT member and approved by Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Each meeting of ELT and Audit and Scrutiny Committee to receive a report on any audit reports giving no or limited assurance, with the relevant Officer reporting on management actions.
<p>Complaints Continuous improvement through learning from complaints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a process to prevent reoccurrence by recording root cause and actions taken.
<p>Decision making Appropriate information and engagement to inform decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update processes for instructions to legal services to ensure all relevant information included. • Change processes for and publish Forward Plan to enable greater and earlier Councillor and public engagement in policy development. • Develop guidance and deliver Officer training to ensure that reports for Councillor decision meet their needs, including clearer information about implications and risks within financial monitoring reports. • Ensure all current committee decisions delegated to directors have appropriate authorisations in place to reflect new service structures.

Issue identified	Completed in 2020-2021
Financial control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accountability and responsibility for spend sits with relevant budget managers through monthly Departmental Leadership Team DLT meetings and Budget Accountability Statements. • Establish a Business Partnering model to deliver a more strategic and value added service to the business and support managers to control their budgets. • Focus on getting the basics right, eg introduction of trackers (such as organisation- wide Savings), Risk and Opportunity Registers, timetables for monthly reporting and budgeting, baselining of 2020-2021 revenue and capital information. • Integrated process for setting 2021-2022 revenue and capital budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. • Re-design financial reports to the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors including the frequency of reporting to ensure reports are transparent, easily understood and have had appropriate sign-off. • Create a register of all approved recruitments to enable detailed budget monitoring. • Note: any outstanding elements around financial control will be picked up as part of the Review by Grant Thornton and will be added to the TFT in 2021-2022.
Governance framework Clarification and regular review of governance arrangements, appropriate oversight and controls of management activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Corporate Improvement Board. • Implement appropriate Officer governance structures to ensure agreed benefits are delivered from projects and programmes.
HR and data protection policies and procedures Regular review and updating of protocols and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete reviews of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whistleblowing policy ○ Contract standing orders

Issue identified	Completed in 2020-2021
codes with associated training to ensure their effective operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake Data Protection Impact Assessments for each directorate. • Review and revise terms of reference for Information Governance Board. • Identify a designated Officer as IT Security Officer.
<p>Member and Officer conduct Regular review and updating of protocols and codes supported by appropriate training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards Committee to take a proactive approach to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Councillors. • Complete new set of protocols to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and information is shared appropriately. • Adopt Values and Behaviours for Councillors and Officers. • Produce guidance notes and training for Councillors on ethical standards. • Commence work to review Councillor Code of Conduct (in light of national Code, once published). • Commence work to implement response to Committee on Standards in Public Life recommendations. • Update procedure for investigation of complaints against Councillors. • Publish records of Councillor training on the website. • Consider proposals for Councillors to confirm annually their commitment to the Nolan principles.
<p>Partnerships Continue to explore opportunities to support efficiency and effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the potential for a form of local partnership with health, social care, business, voluntary and community sector partners to deliver shared objectives.

Issue identified	Completed in 2020-2021
<p>Peer challenge Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness, open to constructive feedback from peer review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule Development Management Peer Challenge.
<p>Performance and risk Systematic and regular management and control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement ongoing programme of review of performance and risk by executive and directorate management teams. • Each service committee to review key performance indicators and risk relevant to their terms of reference and respective strategic plan actions. • Draft and adopt a risk management strategy.
<p>Procurement Actions to address recommendations from the Internal Audit of procurement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training for procurement Officers. • Update procurement strategy. • Revise Contract Standing Orders to make explicit the Council's expectations relating to use of Most Economically Advantageous Tender.
<p>Transparency Ensuring compliance and increasing openness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise ownership of and processes for Freedom of Information requests to ensure the Council publishes information in the public interest. • Make the Council's key strategies and policies easily accessible on the website.

Action Plan for 2021-2022

Please note that the ongoing actions from the 2020 – 2021 action plan have been prioritised. In consultation with the chairs of Audit & Scrutiny committee, only the high priority actions have been included in this statement's action plan for 2021 – 2022. However, the ongoing low and medium actions from last year's statement have been captured, and will be tracked alongside the high priority actions, via the Corporate Improvement Plan.

Furthermore, the high priority actions to be taken in 2021 – 2022 have been reformatted to include owners and completion dates as follows.

Key:

CIP – Corporate Improvement Plan
 CE – Chief Executive
 CFO – Chief Financial Officer and Section 151
 HofL – Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
 EHofC – Executive Head of Communities
 CPO – Interim Chief Planning Officer

CIP Reference	Action Description	ELT Lead	Due Date
3	Explore use of 360 degree staff appraisal tools / Review staff 'check-in' process.	HofL	31/01/2022
4	Consider best approach to replacing the Executive Head of Corporate Resources who left the Council in August 2021. <i>Dependent on Strategy & Resources Committee and CE reviewing Impower's report.</i>	CE	28/02/2022
5	Recruit interim Head of Human Resources.	HofL	COMPLETED
6	Produce business case to ensure there is sufficient capacity in Planning following the release of the PAS report.	CPO	25/11/2021
7	Deliver Tandridge Financial Transformation (TFT).	CFO	Ongoing

	<i>Since the presentation of the GT report and its associated recommendations the Finance team are working to pull together a comprehensive plan of action to address all the underlying issues in Finance to allow the TFT to be built on a stable footing. That plan is currently being pulled together from a number of sources which will prioritise those that are urgent which will enable us to publish the 20/21 Outturn Report, have the 20/21 Accounts signed and provide Members with confidence they need to approve the 22/23 Budget. Those urgent actions associated with the GT recommendations will be discussed at the next A&S meeting on 2nd November.</i>		
9	Ensure compliance with mandatory fraud awareness training	EHofC, HofL	31/03/2022
10	Adopt a Code of Governance, bringing together in one place all elements of the Council's governance system.	HofL	30/03/2022
12	Keep under review the governance arrangements of the Gryllus Holdings Ltd Board to ensure that it is proportionate and reflects best practice for local authority property companies.	EHofC, CFO	28/02/2022
13	Deliver all Health & Safety improvement actions due in 2021/22, as per the recent internal audit, and include a summary of Health & Safety governance in the next edition of the annual governance statement.	EHofC	30/03/2022
30	Chief Executive and Executive Team to review the Strategic Plan with Councillors to ensure it reflects the Council's priorities with respect to its resources and capacity.	CE	30/06/2022
32	Implement Customer First Audit Management Actions.	CE, HofL	30/04/2022

Complaints and Freedom of Information requests update

Audit & Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday 2 November 2021

Report of: Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Purpose: For information

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

This report provides an update about the Council's approach to managing complaints. Complaints are reported quarterly to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and details about what has changed as a result of a complaint are published on the website.

In addition, this report includes details about the type of Freedom of Information requests received.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

Contact officer Giuseppina Valenza Head of Communications & Customer Experience, gvalenza@tandridge.gov.uk.

Recommendation to Committee:

The committee is asked to note and accept the report.

Reason for recommendation:

The Complaints Policy stipulates complaints should be reported quarterly to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

A robust complaints policy ensures customer service standards are sustained and improved. It also helps maintain the Council's reputation. An approach of continuous improvement gained by learning from complaints supports the priority of Building a better Council.

Introduction and background

1. The Council aims to provide an excellent experience every time a customer uses its services, but occasionally things do go wrong. When that happens, the Council would like the opportunity to put things right.
2. If a service falls below the expected standard, officers work with customers to resolve any issues as quickly as possible. Where this still does not resolve the issue, customers may want to make a formal complaint.
3. Complaints, comments and compliments from customers help the Council identify what has worked well and what could be better.
4. Comments and complaints are used to see where processes should be reviewed and improvements made. In addition, compliments are passed on to staff and shared internally.
5. The complaints policy has two stages. Stage 1 – Resolution. If customers are not satisfied with the service they receive, they can make a Stage 1 complaint. Where the customer is not happy with the response to their Stage 1 complaint, they can escalate it to Stage 2 – Review. The customer must clearly explain why they are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 investigation and what they think the Council needs to do to put matters right.

Timescales

6. At both stages complaints:
 - Are automatically acknowledged within 2 working days.
 - Are fully investigated and responded to within 10 working days. Where this is not possible the customer is contacted to let them know when they can expect a reply.
7. If customers are still not happy with the response they receive at Stage 2, they are referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). The LGSCO investigates complaints about councils with the aim of putting things right if they have gone wrong.

Lessons learned

8. We capture what lessons have been learned from complaints, with the aim of improving customer service.
9. As part of the Stage 1 investigations, team leaders review the process or practice used, to highlight where improvements could be made. Any changes are recorded in the system with a record of the action taken as a result, for example staff training, changes to a system or process etc.
10. At Stage 2 a member of the Senior Leadership Team reviews the response to Stage 1, to see if it could have been prevented from escalating to Stage 2.

Number of complaints

11. In the last quarter (1 July to 30 September) there were 44 complaints in total, with 8 Stage 2 complaints. Table A provides more details.
 - There were 12 complaints about recycling and waste. These related to repeat missed collections, missed textile collections, correct procedures not followed by crew, contractors' response to challenge by the resident, the road being blocked by the vehicle and garden waste contract issues.
 - There were 7 complaints about council tax. These related to a summons being issued in error, delayed payment, delayed refund, delay in setting up direct debit and bailiff visits.
12. There are a few complaints which are about the way in which an enquiry was handled by the officer and that officer's response. These have been reviewed and discussed by the team leaders and service lead to see where improvements can be made. The corporate complaints training should also help officers to consider the way in which they respond.

Table A: Complaints 1 July to 30 September 2021

Service	Summary of complaint	Stage 1	Stage 2
Benefits	Officer response, benefits not backdated, incorrect advice given.	3	1
Building control	Delay in response.	1	
Community surveyors	Damage to property, poor communication by contractors, delay in dealing with a pest control issue, delay in fitting new fence, delay in fixing leak, lack of response.	5	
Council tax	Summons issued in error, delayed payment, delayed refund, delay in setting up direct debit, bailiff visit.	7	3
Finance	Lack of response.	1	
Homelessness	Officer response.	5	
Housing	Neighbour dispute, officer response, delay in being housed, delay in response.	2	1
Planning	Unhappy with neighbour's approved application, delay in decision, lack of response, officer response, paying for a lawful development certificate for a simple question.	5	2
Planning enforcement	Unhappy with neighbour's building works, delay in action due to appeals, officer response.	3	1
Rubbish and recycling	Repeated missed collections, missed textile collection, correct procedures not followed by crew, contractors' response to challenge, road blocked by vehicle, garden waste contract issues.	12	
Total		44	8

13. The Tandridge District has around 88,500 people, living in 37,500 households. There are around 3,000 business rate payers. Table B shows complaints as a % of the household and population figures.

Table B: Complaints per household and population

No of complaints	% of household	% of population
44	0.1	0.5

14. Benchmarking with other Surrey councils is difficult as every council categorises and records complaints in different ways. The same methods are not being used to be able to make a like for like comparison.
15. In the last quarter one complaint was escalated to the LGSCO, but has not yet been concluded.

Compensation

16. The Council currently has no specific compensation policy for complaints, although this is being considered.
17. In certain instances, the Council offers discretionary financial compensation to council tenants or leaseholders in the event of a failure of the Housing Landlord Service. Although a discretionary scheme, it is an expectation of the Social Housing Regulator and the Social Housing Ombudsman that there is one.
18. There are also some landlord related compensation payments required by law. These relate to homelessness and disturbance payments when tenants are required to move out of their home. Any compensation is funded by the Housing Revenue account.
19. In the last quarter we have made no housing related compensation payments.
20. Compensation was agreed for two stage 2 complaints relating to council tax and planning. This was agreed due to the poor customer service the customer received and the impact this had on their situation.

Compliments

21. Compliments about staff and the way they have responded to customers are shared internally on the intranet. Recently compliments have been received about receiving prizes from the bin naming competition and good customer service provided by a number of staff.

Freedom of Information (FOI), Data Protection Act, Subject Access Request, Environmental Information Regulation process

22. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides the public with a general right of access to all recorded information held by public authorities. This includes drafts, e-mails, letters, notes, recordings of telephone conversations and CCTV recordings.
23. Anyone can make a freedom of information request – they do not have to be UK citizens, or resident in the UK.

24. All Freedom of Information (FOI), Data Protection Act (DPA), Subject Access Request (SAR) or Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests are registered on the corporate system.

25. The Council has 20 working days to reply to an FOI or EIR request and a month for DPAs and SAR. It can often take longer than this if the request is particularly complex or involves multiple documents. All personal data must be redacted from documents before being released and this can take a long time. If the Council is late in responding a holding response is sent to the enquirer to make them aware the response is taking longer to prepare.

26. In the last quarter (1 July–30 September 2021) we received 115 FOIs. The table below shows the breakdown of requests by service area.

Service area	Number of FOIs
All depts	1
Business rates	20
Climate change & energy efficiency	5
Committees	1
Communications	2
Community Surveyors	1
Council tax	2
Elections	1
Environmental Health	15
Facilities	6
Finance	4
Garages	1
Homelessness	8
Housing	1
HR	3
ICT	3
Land charges	1
Operational services	1
Parking	3
Parks	3
Parks/waste & recycling	1
PH funerals	7
Planning	12
Planning Policy	6
Sheltered housing and community alarms	1
Street cleaning	2
Rubbish and recycling	4
Total	115

27. Many FOIs are repeat requests and are often from companies trying to find out what contracts the Council has, what software it currently uses, how many people are working in a particular service area etc.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Dealing with complaints puts an additional resource burden on the Council in terms of staff time and correctly dealing with complaints in the early stages reduces this. Learning from our mistakes and improving processes reduces the chances of reoccurrence and frees up officer time to focus on delivering services. Where compensation payments are necessary these will need to be met by services from existing budgetary provision.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

This report provides a review of complaints received and an update on the Council's complaint handling. If any complaint raises issues that may have legal implications or consequences, Legal Services should be consulted.

There is no statutory duty to report regularly to any of the committees about the Council's performance, but it is good practice to provide this information.

Under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Regular reports about the Council's performance in responding to complaints assist in demonstrating best value and compliance with the statutory duty.

Equality

To ensure anyone can make a complaint, complaints can be submitted in a number of ways. They can:

- Complete a form.
- E-mail the Council.
- Write to the Council.
- Visit the Council Offices and a complaint can be recorded by an officer.
- Call 01883 722000 and a Customer Services Advisor can complete a form for a customer over the phone.

Complaints on social media cannot be accepted, as it is too difficult to capture information and not practical if it is sensitive or confidential. When a complaint is received via social media, the complainant is asked to contact the Council in one of the above ways.

While all complaints are dealt with confidentially, anonymous complaints cannot be responded to.

Climate change

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None.

----- end of report -----

Residents' Survey results 2021

Audit & Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday 2 November 2021

Report of: Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

The Council carried out a Residents' Survey in July and August 2021. The survey aims to help the Council find out what residents think about the services the Council provides, where they live and how well the Council communicates with them.

This report presents the findings of the survey and puts forward recommendations for next steps.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

Contact officer: Giuseppina Valenza, Head of Communications & Customer Experience, gvalenza@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

That, in accordance with its delegated powers, the Committee determines that:

1. A communications campaign is developed to increase residents' awareness about services and initiatives, as well as to demonstrate value for money.
 2. Further research, including focus groups, is carried out to supplement the results and inform any future prioritisation work.
-

Reason for recommendation:

The Residents' Survey is a snapshot of opinion and can only provide quantitative data. As part of ongoing improvements to customer service and to help inform decision making qualitative research should be carried out. In addition, an ongoing campaign should be developed to make residents' aware of the services, how to access them and to build greater trust between residents and the Council.

Introduction and background

1. The Council carried out a Residents' Survey in July and August 2021. The survey aims to help the Council find out what residents think about the services the Council provides, where they live and how well the Council communicates with them.
2. Approximately 2,510 randomly selected residents received postal questionnaires, 914 were returned, giving a 36% response rate. Based on the completed questionnaires, there is 95% confidence the findings are statistically correct, with a margin of error of + or - 3.3%.
3. In addition, 156 surveys were submitted online which were not part of the postal survey sample. Only half of these surveys were fully completed. While the responses and comments made can be considered alongside the main results, it is important to remember they are not statistically valid, so are not representative of residents' views in general.
4. There was general publicity about the survey and a special request went out to all secondary schools in the district to invite those aged under 25 to complete the survey. This request was also shared widely on social media and across other channels. There were 18 responses.
5. The Council carries out this postal Residents' Survey every two years and includes some of the same questions the Local Government Association (LGA) uses in its quarterly telephone survey. This allows councils to benchmark against national trends. The survey is prepared and carried out in-house.

Key findings

6. 82% of respondents are satisfied with the area as a place to live and 57% with the way the Council runs things. 33% agree the Council provides value for money, while 33% neither agree nor disagree. 75% strongly feel they belong to their local area and 57% trust the Council.
7. 66% feel safe outside in the local area after dark, while 90% feel safe outside during the day. 87% don't think noisy neighbours or loud parties are a problem, 76% don't think vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property or vehicles is an issue.

8. 66% think the Council keeps them well informed. 82% of respondents read the Tandridge Magazine, 77% think it keeps them informed about the Council's work and local services.
9. 48% of respondents have contacted the Council up to three times in the last year, while 38% have not contacted the Council at all. 89% usually contact the Council by phone, 82% by e-mail and 75% use the website. 70% use the Council's website at least once every few months.
10. 86% of respondents think it is important the Council does whatever it can to tackle climate change and 59% want more electric charging points in the area.

Context

11. Any quantitative survey is just a snapshot of opinion. This means responses can be affected by external events or activities, or what is happening at the time it is completed. If you asked the same sample the same questions at another time, responses could vary.
12. This survey should be considered within the context of the last two years, with the majority of that time being taken up living through and dealing with the pandemic. In addition, the Council's financial crisis and other issues have been well publicised.
13. In two and three tier local government areas there is always confusion about which organisation provides which service. When residents complete the survey, they may be thinking about county, not just district services. This is reflected in the many comments about road conditions, traffic safety and street lighting.
14. Other factors such as national issues and politics, will also have an impact on respondents' views.

Analysis

15. Overall, the results have not really changed since the last survey was carried out in 2019. A 10% increase or decrease in results is considered to indicate significant change.
16. Respondents are highly satisfied with the area as a place to live, feel well informed, feel they belong to their local area, are safe and don't have an issue with anti-social behaviour.
17. Table A shows how the results compare to the LGA's national survey carried out in June 2021. As the LGA conducts telephone surveys, responses are likely to be more favourable than postal surveys.

18. Although the figures are lower than the LGA's, since the last survey there has been no further decline in responses to questions about how the Council runs things, or the degree of trust in the Council, as well as around providing value for money.

Table A: Tandridge District Council and LGA results

Organisation	Satisfied with area	Way council runs things	Value for money	Safe after dark	Safe during day	Well informed	Acts on concerns	Trusts local council
Tandridge	82%	57%	33%	66%	90%	66%	46%	57%
LGA	82%	68%	49%	79%	94%	61%	62%	64%

19. Although the sample size is statistically valid, there is some bias in the sample. Slightly more women completed the survey than men and census data shows Tandridge is 51% female and 49% male.

20. There were very few responses from anyone under 24 and this group makes up 22% of the population, while there are more responses from the 65+ age group than represents the population.

Next steps and recommendations

21. The Residents' Survey is a useful tool to gauge residents' views and satisfaction and to highlight any possible areas of concern. Ideally these views should be validated with qualitative data.

22. There is a strong relationship between well informed residents and satisfaction with services. In this survey the score for residents feeling they are being kept informed is higher than the national average.

23. Taking that into account, it is recommended an ongoing proactive communications campaign is developed which could have three main objectives:

- To continue to keep residents informed about the Council and its services, ensuring access to services is easy and clear to understand.
- To demonstrate services do provide value for money.
- To build greater trust between residents and the Council.

24. To further validate the findings, it is recommended qualitative data is gathered to test some of the responses and to probe deeper into residents' views, as well as gather views from younger people. This work can form part of the review of the Strategic Plan.

25. This research can be gathered by organising focus groups, as well as talking to parish councils, partners and other community groups. If appropriate, councillors can also be involved in attending and leading some of these groups.

26. Depending on the outcome of that further research, an action plan can be developed to address any key areas of concern.
27. Following the 2019 survey, similar recommendations were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 November 2019, but unfortunately the work was not carried out due to the start of the pandemic in early 2020.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

Whilst the survey does not result directly in financial implications, there are a number of areas in these findings which should be reviewed and explored further as part of the Council's Twin Track approach to setting the budget for 2022/23 and 2023/24, for example channel shift.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

The results of the residents' survey will contribute to the Council's overall understanding of what is most important to the residents and help councillors and the Senior Management Team to confirm areas of good performance and areas where improvements are needed.

Any findings have been published in accordance with all relevant data protection regulations. As such no individual will be identifiable as a result of the survey publication.

Equality

There is some bias in the sample which could be perceived to exclude the views of those under 24.

Climate change

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

Appendix A - Have your say about council services 2021 survey results

Background papers

None.

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Have your say about council services 2021

Contents

Executive summary and summary of key findings

1. Introduction
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Appendices

- A. Survey
- B. Statistical reliability
- C. Benchmarking with national data

Executive summary

Have your say about council services 2021

This report presents the findings of a survey, carried out in July and August 2021, designed to help the Council find out what residents think about the services the Council provides, where they live and how well the Council communicates with them.

Approximately 2,510 randomly selected residents received postal surveys, 914 were returned, giving a 36% response rate. Based on the completed surveys, we can be 95% confident the findings are statistically correct, with a margin of error of + or – 3.3% (please see Appendix B – statistical reliability).

Summary of key findings

The number in brackets () is the percentage response from the same questions asked in a survey carried out in 2019. If there is no bracket that question was not asked in 2019.

Section 1: Your local area and provision of services

- 82% (84%) are satisfied with the area as a place to live.
- 57% (59%) are satisfied with the way the Council runs things.
- 33% (35%) agree or strongly agree the Council provides value for money. 33% neither agree or disagree.
- 66% (68%) think the Council keeps them well informed.
- 75% (75%) strongly feel they belong to their local area.
- 57% (56%) trust the Council.

Section 2: Community Safety

- 66% (69%) feel very or fairly safe outside in the local area after dark.
- 90% (91%) feel very or fairly safe outside during the day.
- 87% (89%) don't think noisy neighbours or loud parties are a problem
- 76% (79%) don't think vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property or vehicles is an issue.

Section 3: Climate change and environmental issues.

- 86% think it is important the council does whatever it can to tackle climate change.
- 2% drive an electric vehicle and 6% a hybrid vehicle.
- 40% are likely to buy an electric vehicle next time they buy a car.
- 59% want more electric charging points in the district.

Section 4: Getting information

- 48% (50%) had contacted the council up to three times, 11% (12%) up to six times and 4% (5%) seven or more times. 38% (32%) had not contacted the Council.
- 89% (91%) usually contact the Council by phone, 82% (80%) by e-mail and 75% (79%) use the website.
- 85% want information through their door, 80% by e-mail and 72% online.
- 82% (85%) of respondents read the Tandridge Magazine.
- 77% (83%) think it keeps them informed about the Council's work and local services.

Section 5: Using online services and information

- 70% use the Council's website at least once every few months.
- 63% are satisfied with the website, while 31% are neither satisfied or dissatisfied.
- 80% would be more likely to use the website if it meant their concern or issue was processed more quickly, 37% if it was clear contacting the council online was cheaper than calling or visiting us.

Section 6: About you

- 43% (40%) were male and 55% (57%) were female.
- 48% (46%) were over 65 years old, 21% (20%) were between 55 and 64, 14% (19%) were between 45 and 54 and 11% (11%) were between 35 and 44.
- 6% (6%) are registered disabled or receiving disability allowance.

Benchmarking

The Council benchmarks against the Local Government Association's (LGA) national resident satisfaction. For more details please see Appendix C.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a survey, carried out in July and August 2021, designed to help the Council find out what residents think about the services the Council provides, the area they live and how well the Council communicates with them.

2. Methodology

A random sample of 2,510 households was chosen from the council tax register of approximately 37,402 households.

A postal survey (Appendix A), designed and printed in-house, was distributed to the selected properties. A follow-up reminder letter was sent to encourage a higher level of response. A news release was issued to raise awareness of the consultation exercise, alongside social media posts.

Residents could also request a copy of the survey to complete or fill one in online. We received 156 questionnaires online which were not part of the postal sample. These responses will be considered alongside the postal returns.

3. Format of report

The report contains a brief validation of the random sample, followed by an analysis of the main findings. All percentages are based on the number of respondents answering the particular question. It is important to remember not all respondents answer every question.

Where percentages do not add up to 100, this is due to computer rounding and/or incomplete questionnaires. The use of an * is to indicate responses were received, but totalled less than 1%.

4. Validation of sample

When carrying out any survey it is important the sample should closely mirror the general characteristics of the population. Any bias in the sample should be identified and clearly highlighted where it may be a significant factor in any of the responses.

Detailed analysis of the demographic data can be undertaken on request.

5. Statistical reliability

Approximately 2,510 randomly selected residents received postal surveys. Based on 914 completed questionnaires, we can be 95% confident the findings are statistically correct, with a margin of error of + or – 3.3%. (Please see Appendix B – statistical reliability).

It is widely recognised by market research agencies that 500 replies will produce sufficient accuracy for forecasting purposes. Only samples of households were surveyed. This means all results are subject to sampling tolerances.

6. Main findings

The use of an * is to indicate that responses were received, but they totalled less than 1%. The number in brackets () is the percentage from questions asked in a survey carried out in 2019.

6.1 Section 1: Your local area and provision of services

Question 1: Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
34% (33%)	48% (52%)	8% (7%)	7% (5%)	3% (2%)	*% (8%)

Question 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Tandridge District Council runs things?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
10% (10%)	47% (49%)	23% (19%)	12% (12%)	5% (6%)	3% (3%)

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Tandridge District Council provides value for money?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree or disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
5% (4%)	28% (31%)	33% (34%)	21% (18%)	9% (5%)	5% (6%)

Question 4: On balance, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about Tandridge District Council?

I speak positively of the council without being asked	6% (5%)
I speak positively of the council if I am asked about it	29% (32%)
I have no views one way or another	42% (36%)
I speak negatively about the council without being asked	8% (5%)
I speak negatively about the council if I am asked about it	12% (17%)
Don't know	4% (5%)

Question 5: To what extent do you think Tandridge District Council acts on the concerns of local residents?

A great deal	5% (5%)
A fair amount	41% (40%)
Not very much	31% (29%)
Not at all	6% (8%)
Don't know	17% (18%)

Question 6: Overall, how well informed do you think Tandridge District Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

Very well informed	11% (9%)
Fairly well informed	55% (59%)
Not very well informed	22% (18%)
Not well informed at all	5% (6%)
Don't know	8% (7%)

Question 7: If you don't think Tandridge District Council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits it provides, please explain why and include suggestions for how we could improve.

Responses covered lack of direct communication, over and underuse of social media, issues with services such as recycling, planning, Local Plan, roads, buses, speeding, traffic, not being able to get through on the phones or a lack of response.

Question 8: How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?

Very strongly	23% (26%)
Fairly strongly	52% (50%)
Not very strongly	19% (15%)
Not at all strongly	4% (4%)
Don't know	3% (3%)

Question 9: How much do you trust Tandridge District Council?

A great deal	7% (8%)
A fair amount	50% (52%)
Not very much	21% (22%)
Not at all	8% (6%)
Don't know	13% (17%)

Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together? By getting on well together, we mean treating each other with respect.

Definitely agree	13% (13%)
Tend to agree	43% (47%)
Neither agree nor disagree	18% (14%)
Tend to disagree	5% (5%)
Definitely disagree	2% (2%)
Too few people in local area	4% (4%)
All the same ethnic background	3% (4%)
Don't know	12% (10%)

Question 11: To what extent would you agree or disagree that people in this local area pull together to improve the local area?

Definitely agree	14% (15%)
Tend to agree	47% (45%)
Neither agree nor disagree	19% (21%)
Tend to disagree	9% (9%)
Definitely disagree	3% (2%)
Nothing needs improving	*% (*%)
Don't know	7% (8%)

6.2 Section 2: Community safety

Question 12: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

Very safe	Fairly safe	Neither safe/unsafe	Fairly unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
14% (15%)	52% (54%)	14% (12%)	13% (12%)	4% (5%)	4% (2%)

Question 13: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?

Very safe	Fairly safe	Neither safe/unsafe	Fairly unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
43% (47%)	47% (44%)	6% (6%)	2% (2%)	1% (0%)	1% (1%)

Question 14: Thinking about your local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are?

	A very big problem	A fairly big problem	Not a very big problem	Not a problem at all	Don't know/no opinion
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	3% (2%)	8% (7%)	38% (38%)	49% (52%)	2% (2%)
Rubbish or litter lying around	13% (10%)	28% (24%)	42% (44%)	16% (21%)	1% (1%)
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	4% (5%)	16% (16%)	47% (49%)	27% (30)	4% (3%)
People using or dealing drugs	6% (4%)	14% (12%)	24% (29%)	27% (26%)	29% (29%)
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	2% (2%)	8% (6%)	39% (43%)	36% (36%)	14% (14%)
Groups hanging around the streets	3% (3%)	13% (7%)	36% (43%)	33% (36%)	15% (12%)

6.3 Section 3: Climate change and environmental issues

Question 15: How important is it to you the district council does whatever it can to tackle climate change and sustainability?

Very important	49%
Important	37%
Neither important or unimportant	9%
Unimportant	2%
Very unimportant	2%

Question 16: In our climate change policy we have committed to the following actions. Do you agree these are a priority?

Actions	Yes	No	Not sure
Installing electric vehicle charging points in our car parks	73%	11%	16%
Reporting greenhouse gas emissions from our buildings and business activities	64%	14%	23%
Switching our energy supply to green tariffs which use renewable energy	80%	6%	14%
Working with partners to implement key flood alleviation schemes and other climate mitigation where possible	82%	5%	13%
Finding ways to support community-led energy schemes	74%	6%	20%
Working to engage younger residents on climate change	74%	10%	16%
Finding ways to make our buildings and council homes more carbon neutral	81%	7%	12%
Exploring the potential for renewable energy generation in the district	78%	6%	16%

Question 17: Do you drive an electric vehicle?

2% of respondents drive an electric car, 6% a hybrid car, while 92% drive neither.

Question 18: If you are a car owner, how likely are you to buy an electric vehicle next time you buy a car?

Very likely	Fairly likely	Neither likely/unlikely	Fairly unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know
15%	25%	15%	14%	21%	10%

Question 19: Would you like to see more electric vehicle charging points in the area?

59% of respondents would like to see more electric vehicle charging points, 8% would not, 23% might and 10% don't know.

Question 20: Would you like changes in the use of parks which would mean dogs must be kept on a lead, kept out altogether eg in children’s playgrounds, dogs’ mess cleared up and restricting the number of dogs one person can walk at a time?

52% of respondents would like these changes to be made, 26% would not and 22% might.

Question 21: Did you know you can use any litter bin or your household waste bin to get rid of dogs’ mess?

36% were aware they could put dogs mess in litter bins and household waste bins, 55% were not and 9% were not sure.

6.4 Section 4: Getting information

Question 22: How many times have you contacted the Council in the last year?

48% (50%) had contacted the Council up to three times, 11% (12%) up to six times and 4% (5%) seven or more times. 38% (32%) had not contacted the Council.

Question 23: How do you usually contact the Council?

Method	2021	2019
Telephone	89%	91%
E-mail	82%	80%
Website	75%	79%
Personal visit	18%	39%
Letter	24%	24%
Text	7%	2%
Twitter	2%	4%
Facebook	5%	3%
Nextdoor	4%	

Question 24: How do you currently find out about Tandridge District Council and the services it provides?

Method	Yes	No
Council website	85%	15%
Southern Building Control Partnership website	6%	94%
Tandridge Magazine	79%	21%
Printed information provided by the council	75%	25%
Council e-mails and e-newsletters	49%	51%
Direct contact with staff, public meetings, events	16%	84%
Council’s social media sites (eg Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor)	16%	84%
Social media outside the council	18%	82%
From your local councillor	26%	75%
Local media (eg newspapers, TV, radio)	36%	64%
Word of mouth (eg friends, neighbours, relations)	73%	27%
Other (please specify) Answers included CR3 Magazine, parish councils, local magazine.	5%	95%

Question 25: How would you like to receive information about the council? Please tick as many as apply.

Method	Yes	No
E-mail	80%	20%
Text	24%	76%
Online (website and social media)	72%	28%
Through your door (magazine, leaflet, letter)	85%	15%
Face to face	26%	74%
Other	5%	95%

Question 26: Have you heard of the Tandridge Magazine, the Council's magazine delivered to homes twice a year?

Yes, I have heard of it and always read it	53% (58%)
Yes, I have heard of it and sometimes read it	29% (27%)
Yes, I have heard of it, but don't read it	5% (4%)
No, I haven't heard of it	13% (10%)

Question 27: If you have read the Tandridge Magazine, how well informed does it keep you about Tandridge District Council activities?

Very well informed	17% (22%)
Fairly well informed	60% (60%)
Not very informed	9% (7%)
Not at all informed	2% (2%)
I don't read it	12% (9%)

Question 28: Would you prefer to receive the magazine electronically, for example in e-newsletter format?

22% of respondents would like to receive the magazine electronically, 61% would not and 17% might.

6.5 Section 5: Using online services and information

Question 29: If you use the internet, how confident are you in doing the following online?

	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	N/A
Using a search engine	67%	18%	4%	3%	8%
Downloading/saving a photo	53%	19%	11%	8%	9%
Finding a website you have visited before	67%	19%	3%	3%	7%
Sending a message	72%	15%	3%	3%	7%
Commenting and sharing information online	51%	17%	10%	7%	15%
Buying items or services from a website	66%	16%	5%	5%	8%
Buying and installing apps on a device	54%	16%	11%	9%	10%
Solving a problem using online help	38%	23%	16%	14%	9%
Verifying information	39%	26%	15%	11%	10%
Completing online forms with personal details	51%	23%	8%	9%	9%
Creating something from images, music or video	24%	14%	21%	22%	19%
Identifying possible scams in e-mails and text	35%	39%	10%	9%	7%

Question 30: How often do you use the Council's website?

0% (0%) use the Council's website every day, 3% (4%) once a week, 11% (13%) once a month, 55% (52%) every few months and 30% (33%) never use the website.

Question 31: For which of the following reasons did you visit Tandridge District Council's website? *Please tick one response on each line.*

To get information or advice	87%
To make a payment	21%
To apply for a service	34%
To make a booking	2%
To comment on a consultation/planning application	28%
To apply for a benefit	7%
To find out about your councillor	9%
To view committee agendas, minutes and reports	8%
To report a problem	34%
To make a compliment/comment/suggestion about the Council	4%
To make a complaint about the Council	6%
Other (please specify) Answers included to find recycling and rubbish dates, report flytipping, look up job vacancies, bus pass information, look at planning applications, review council tax bill.	

Question 32: If you use the website how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the website overall?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
13% (11%)	(49%) 49%	31% (32%)	4% (6%)	2% (2%)

Question 33: If you have selected fairly or very dissatisfied with the website in question 32, please give details.

Answers included hard to navigate or find the information they needed, some sections being hard to use such as the planning search, no access to council tax account details.

Question 34: Which of the following, if any, would make you more likely to use the internet for council services?

If it meant your concern or issue was processed more quickly	80%
If there were Apps for completing transactions easily	26%
If it was clear contacting us online was cheaper for the Council than calling or visiting us	37%
If the website was better designed and easier to navigate	42%

6.6 Section 6: About you

Question 35: Would you like to sign up to our e-newsletters?

45% (47%) of respondents said they wanted to sign up for our e-newsletters.

Question 36: Would you like to take part in any focus or discussion groups we run?

11% (12%) of respondents would take part in a focus group.

Question 37: Gender

43% (40%) of respondents were male and 55% (57%) were female, 2% preferred not to say.

Question 38: Age

Respondents fell into the following age categories.

Age range	%	Census data (Surrey)	%
Under 16	*%	Under 16	19%
16-24	*%	16-17	3%
25-34	4% (5%)	18-24	7%
35-44	11% (11%)	18-64	59%
45-54	14% (19%)		
55-64	21% (20%)		
65-74	22% (24%)	65+	18%
75-84	20% (16%)		
85+	6% (5%)	85+	3%
Prefer not to say	2%		

Question 39: Are you registered disabled or receiving disability allowance?

6% (7%) are registered disabled or receiving disability allowance, while 94% (93%) are not.

Question 40: Does this illness or disability limit your activities in any way?

Of those who answered yes to question 39, 8% find their activities are limited by their disability.

Question 41: How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Ethnic origin	2021	Census data (Surreyi)
White	92%	94%
Asian or Asian British	1%	
Black or Black British	1%	
Indian or Indian British	1%	6%
Mixed	1%	
Other	0%	
Prefer not to say	4%	

Question 42. Do you have any other comments?

Comments covered traffic, poor road surfaces, pot holes, lorries, grass and hedge cutting, parking, bus services and transport, finances of the council, recycling and waste service, planning issues.

Appendices

A. Survey

B. Statistical reliability

C. Benchmarking with national data

Date:

Unique reference number:

Dear Resident,

Have your say about council services

We are inviting you to take part in this survey to help us find out what you think about the services we provide, the area you live in and how well we communicate with you.

We will use the findings of this research to see how you think we are doing and to help us decide if we need to do anything differently in future.

Please take this opportunity to have your say. It doesn't matter if you've only just moved into the area or if you don't pay council tax. It's important we hear everybody's views.

To ensure personal information about you is secure, all your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be stored securely.

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please do not hesitate to contact Customer Services on 01883 722000 or e-mail [**customerservices@tandridge.gov.uk**](mailto:customerservices@tandridge.gov.uk).

Please return the completed survey in the FREEPOST envelope provided (no stamp needed) as soon as possible.

Alternatively, you can complete the survey online at [**www.tandridge.gov.uk/survey**](http://www.tandridge.gov.uk/survey), but please make sure you use the unique reference number at the top of this page.

I very much hope you will be able to take part and thank you for your help in advance.

Yours faithfully,



David Ford
Chief Executive

Section 1: Your local area and provision of services

Question 1: Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? *Please tick one response.*

Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Tandridge District Council runs things? *Please tick one response.*

Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Tandridge District Council provides value for money? *Please tick one response.*

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree or disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 4: On balance, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about Tandridge District Council? *Please tick one response.*

I speak positively of the council without being asked	<input type="checkbox"/>
I speak positively of the council if I am asked about it	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have no views one way or another	<input type="checkbox"/>
I speak negatively about the council without being asked	<input type="checkbox"/>
I speak negatively about the council if I am asked about it	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 5: To what extent do you think Tandridge District Council acts on the concerns of local residents? *Please tick one response.*

A great deal <input type="checkbox"/>	A fair amount <input type="checkbox"/>	Not very much <input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 6: Overall, how well informed do you think Tandridge District Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides? *Please tick one response.*

Very well informed <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly well informed <input type="checkbox"/>	Not very well informed <input type="checkbox"/>	Not well informed at all <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 7: If you don't think Tandridge District Council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits it provides, please explain why and include suggestions for how we could improve.

Question 8: How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area? *Please tick one response.*

Very strongly <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly strongly <input type="checkbox"/>	Not very strongly <input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all strongly <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 9: How much do you trust Tandridge District Council? *Please tick one response.*

A great deal <input type="checkbox"/>	A fair amount <input type="checkbox"/>	Not very much <input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together? By getting on well together, we mean treating each other with respect. *Please tick one response.*

Definitely agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Definitely disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Too few people in local area <input type="checkbox"/>	All the same ethnic background <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 11: To what extent would you agree or disagree that people in your local area pull together to improve the local area? *Please tick one response.*

Definitely agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Definitely disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Nothing needs improving <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Section 2: Community safety

Question 12: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark? *Please tick one response.*

Very safe <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly safe <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither safe or unsafe <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly unsafe <input type="checkbox"/>	Very unsafe <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 13: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day? *Please tick one response.*

Very safe <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly safe <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither safe or unsafe <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly unsafe <input type="checkbox"/>	Very unsafe <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 14: Thinking about your local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are? *Please tick one response on each line.*

	A very big problem	A fairly big problem	Not a very big problem	Not a problem at all	Don't know/ no opinion
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubbish or litter lying around	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People using or dealing drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Groups hanging around the streets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 3: Climate change and environmental issues

Question 15: How important is it to you Tandridge District Council does whatever it can to tackle climate change and sustainability? *Please tick one response.*

Very important <input type="checkbox"/>	Important <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither important or unimportant <input type="checkbox"/>	Unimportant <input type="checkbox"/>	Very unimportant <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 16: In our climate change action plan we have committed to the following actions. Do you agree these are a priority? *Please tick one response on each line.*

	Yes	No	Not sure
Installing electric vehicle chargepoints in our car parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting greenhouse gas emissions from our buildings and business activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Switching our energy supply to green tariffs which use renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with partners to implement key flood alleviation schemes and other climate mitigation where possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding ways to support community-led energy schemes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working to engage younger residents on climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding ways to make our buildings and council homes more carbon neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exploring the potential for renewable energy generation in the district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 17: Do you drive an electric vehicle? *Please tick one response.*

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Hybrid <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 18: If you are a car owner, how likely are you to buy an electric vehicle next time you buy a car? *Please tick one response.*

Very likely <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly likely <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither likely or unlikely <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly unlikely <input type="checkbox"/>	Very unlikely <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 19: Would you like to see more electric vehicle charging points across the district? *Please tick one response.*

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Maybe <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 20: Would you like changes in the use of parks which would mean dogs must be kept on a lead, kept out altogether eg in children's playgrounds, dogs' mess cleared up and restricting the number of dogs one person can walk at a time? *Please tick one response.*

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Maybe <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 21: Did you know you can use any litter bin or your household waste bin to get rid of dogs' mess? *Please tick one response.*

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure <input type="checkbox"/>
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Section 4: Getting information

Question 22: How many times have you contacted the Council in the last year? *Please tick one response.*

1-3 times <input type="checkbox"/>	4-6 times <input type="checkbox"/>	7 or more times <input type="checkbox"/>	Not contacted the council <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 23: How do you usually contact the Council? *Please tick as many as apply.*

Method	Yes	No
Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal visit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Method	Yes	No
Text	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nextdoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 24: How do you currently find out about Tandridge District Council and the services it provides? *Please tick as many as apply.*

Method	Yes	No
Tandridge District Council website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Southern Building Control Partnership website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tandridge Magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Printed information provided by the Council (eg leaflets, magazines, flyers, public notices)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council e-mails and e-newsletters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direct contact with the Council (eg contact with staff, public meetings and events)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council's social media sites (eg Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social media outside the Council (eg other Facebook, Twitter, YouTube accounts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
From your local councillor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local media (eg newspapers, TV, radio)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Word of mouth (eg friends, neighbours, relatives)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 25: How would you like to receive information about the Council? *Please tick as many as apply.*

Method	Yes	No
E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Text	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online (website and social media)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through your door (magazine, leaflet, letter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Face to face	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 26: Have you heard of the Tandridge Magazine, the Council's magazine delivered to homes twice a year? *Please tick one response.*

Yes, I have heard of it and always read it <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I have heard of it and sometimes read it <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I have heard of it but don't read it <input type="checkbox"/>	No, I haven't heard of it <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 27: If you have read the Tandridge Magazine, how well informed does it keep you about Tandridge District Council activities? *Please tick one response.*

Very informed <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly informed <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly informed <input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all informed <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't read it <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 28: Would you prefer to receive the magazine electronically, for example in e-newsletter format?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Maybe <input type="checkbox"/>
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Section 5: Using online services and information

Question 29: If you use the internet, how confident are you in doing the following online? *Please tick one response on each line.*

	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Not applicable
Using a search engine eg Google or Bing, to look for information online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Downloading/saving a photo you found online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding a website you have visited before	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sending a personal message to another person via e-mail or online messaging service for example using Messenger or WhatsApp	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carefully making comments and sharing information online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buying items or services from a website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buying and installing apps on a device	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solving a problem you have with a device or digital service using online help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verifying sources of information you found online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completing online application forms which include personal details	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating something new from existing online images, music or video	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying possible scams in e-mails and text messages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Questions 30: How often do you use the Council's website? *Please tick one response.*

Every day <input type="checkbox"/>	Once a week <input type="checkbox"/>	Once a month <input type="checkbox"/>	Every few months <input type="checkbox"/>	Never use the website (please go to question 34) <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 31: For which of the following reasons did you visit Tandridge District Council's website? *Please tick one response on each line.*

To get information or advice (eg waste collection, local events)	<input type="checkbox"/>
To make a payment (eg council tax, business rates, penalty charge notice)	<input type="checkbox"/>
To apply for a service (eg get an additional recycling bin)	<input type="checkbox"/>
To make a booking (eg hiring a sports pitch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
To comment on a consultation/planning application	<input type="checkbox"/>
To apply for a benefit (eg housing, council tax discount or exemption)	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find out about your councillor	<input type="checkbox"/>
To view committee agendas, minutes and reports	<input type="checkbox"/>
To report a problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
To make a compliment/comment/suggestion about the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
To make a complaint about the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 32: If you use our website, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the website, overall? *Please tick one response.*

Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Fairly dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------

Question 33: If you have selected fairly or very dissatisfied with the website in question 32, please give details.

Question 34: Which of the following, if any, would make you more likely to use the internet for council services?

If it meant your concern or issue was processed more quickly	<input type="checkbox"/>
If there were Apps for completing transactions easily	<input type="checkbox"/>
If it was clear contacting us online was cheaper for the Council than calling or visiting us	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the website was better designed and easier to navigate	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 6: About you

Question 35: Would you like to sign up to receive our e-newsletters, if you do not already?

	Yes - please add me to your e-mail subscription list for the following e-newsletters. Please tick as many as you would like to receive. <input type="checkbox"/>	No - please do not add my details to your e-mail subscription list <input type="checkbox"/>
News and events	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Business newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Caterham and North Tandridge Regeneration news	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Housing Tenants news	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Planning Committee updates	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recycling and rubbish collections updates	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tandridge Local Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tandridge Magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Question 36: Would you like to take part in any focus or discussion groups we run?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 37: If you answered yes to questions 35 or 36, please complete your details below:

Name:

E-mail:

Address:

Postcode:

Question 38: Gender

Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 39: Age

Age range									
Under 16 <input type="checkbox"/>	16-24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25-34 <input type="checkbox"/>	35-44 <input type="checkbox"/>	45-54 <input type="checkbox"/>	55-64 <input type="checkbox"/>	65-74 <input type="checkbox"/>	75-84 <input type="checkbox"/>	85+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

Question 40: Are you registered disabled or receiving disability allowance?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 41: Does this illness or disability limit your activities in any way?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 42: How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Ethnic origin						
White <input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British <input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian or Indian British <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

Question 43: Do you have any other comments?

Appendix B

Statistical reliability

The respondents to the questionnaire are only a sample of the total population so we cannot be certain the figures obtained are as accurate as if all households had been interviewed (the “true” values).

We can predict the variation between the returned sample and the “true” values from knowing the size of the sample on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given.

The confidence level within which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within a specified range.

The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “95% confidence interval”:

Number of respondents	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages
1100	$\pm 3\%$
600	$\pm 4\%$
100	$\pm 9.8\%$
50	$\pm 13\%$

For example, with a returned sample size of 600, the chances are 19 in 20 that the “true” value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of ± 4 percentage points from the sample result.

Appendix C

Benchmarking with national data

Understanding resident or customer views is a key element of assessing the effectiveness of an authority, alongside cost and performance information. It can help make informed comparisons which can strengthen local accountability and helps with managing performance.

The Local Government Association (LGA) measures resident satisfaction with councils every three to four months. There is a key set of questions and criteria, which needs to be met to ensure these questions can be benchmarked. The LGA carries out its survey by telephone, while the Council uses a postal survey.

Questions 1-3 are compulsory, the rest are optional. Tandridge District Council used all the questions in its 2021 survey.

Question 1: Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

Question 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Tandridge District Council runs things?

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Tandridge District Council provides value for money?

Question 5: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

Question 6: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?

Question 7: Overall, how well informed do you think Tandridge District Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

Question 8: To what extent do you think Tandridge District Council acts on the concerns of local residents?

Question 9: How much do you trust Tandridge District Council?

Organisation	Satisfied with area	Satisfied with way council runs things	Value for money	Safe after dark	Safe during day	Well informed	Acts on concerns	Trusts local council
Tandridge 2021 (2019) Postal survey	82% (84%)	57% (59%)	33% (35%)	66% (69%)	90% (91%)	66% (68%)	46% (44%)	57% (56%)
LGA June 2021 (2019) telephone survey	82% (80%)	68% (63%)	49% (48%)	79% (76%)	94% (94%)	61% (59%)	62% (59%)	64% (59%)

For more information please contact Giuseppina Valenza, Head of Communications and Customer Experience, on 01883 732704, e-mail communications@tandridge.gov.uk.

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Performance Exception Report – Verbal Update

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 2 November

Report of: Chief Finance Officer (Section 151)

Purpose: For information

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

To update the Committee on the progress of requested changes to the exceptions report that were requested at the Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 30 September 2021.

This report supports the Council's priority of:

Building a better Council

Contact officer William Mace – Programme Management Officer

wmace@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

That the Committee notes the progress of the development of the exceptions report in advance of the formal written report due at the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 27 January 2022.

Reason for recommendation:

To support the Committee to monitor performance and risk at the Council.

1. Introduction and background

1.1. The Committee's terms of reference include reviewing and scrutinising "the decisions and performance of the Council".¹ In addition, Section xiii of the 'terms' state that the Committee will:

"Monitor the Council's performance against targets which seek to ensure the provision of cost effective, quality services to the community (as part of the Council's own performance management regime)".²

1.2. The Committee regularly receives a performance and risk exception report for each policy committee: Community Services, Planning Policy, Housing and Strategy and Resources.

1.3. At the meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 30 September 2021, the Committee requested that changes be made to the regular report to further rationalise and prioritise the exceptions that the Committee needs to review.

1.4. A fuller report is scheduled to be presented to Committee on 27 January 2022. The purpose of this verbal update is to update the Committee on the work completed to date.

2. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

2.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report as this is a verbal update on the reporting format to Committee.

3. Comments of the Head of Legal Services

3.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report as this is a verbal update on the reporting format to Committee.

4. Equality

4.1. This report contains no proposals that would disadvantage any particular minority groups.

¹ Overview & Scrutiny Committee (2020) *Proposed Changes to the Terms of Reference and Name of the Committee*, p. 3. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s792/ToR%20and%20Committee%20name.pdf> [Last accessed 16/06/2021].

² Overview & Scrutiny Committee (2020) *Minutes*, p. 1. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g898/Public%20minutes%2030th-Jul-2020%2019.30%20Audit%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=11> [Last accessed 16/06/2021].

5. Climate change

5.1. This report contains no proposals that would impact on the Council's commitment to climate change.

6. Appendices

6.1. None.

7. Background papers

7.1. None.

----- end of report -----

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