

**REPORT TO:** CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS BOROUGH COUNCIL

**TITLE:** EXTRAORDINARY AUDIT – PROGRESS AND CONSIDERATION OF FINAL REPORTS

**DATE:** 27 MARCH 2023

**BY:** ELMA MURRAY, INDEPENDENT ADVISER

**FOR DECISION/INFORMATION: FOR DECISION**

## **1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 The report provides an overview on progress since the last Special Council Meeting on 20 February 2023 in respect of the Extraordinary Audit. Once Council have considered the three Review Reports on today's agenda the report makes recommendations on the next steps for the Council.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Council has received regular updates from the Council's Implementation Team in respect of the actions to address the recommendations of the Extraordinary Audit. One of the actions was to appoint an Independent Adviser to provide support and challenge to the Council and assurance to the Department for Communities about the progress of the Council's work.
- 2.2 I was appointed as the Independent Adviser on 20 October 2022 following recommendation from the Local Government Staff Commission and with the approval of the Department for Communities.
- 2.3 At the last Special Council Meeting on the 20 February 2023 Council was advised that reports of the Reviews in respect of recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 5 had been completed. Good progress was being made in respect of recommendations 6 and 7, however, to ensure the confidential investigation work could progress without danger of prejudice the publication of the reports was delayed.

## **3. Progress Update**

- 3.1 Following the Special Council Meeting on 20 February 2023 the Mayor wrote to the Department for Communities providing copies of all of the reports and seeking an extension to the timetable to complete the work until the 4 April 2023. The Department for Communities have agreed to this extension and have also advised that this is the absolute final date.
- 3.2 While the investigation work in respect of Recommendations 6 and 7 continues to progress, it is not yet complete. However, the work has progressed sufficiently to allow Council to consider the reports of each of the three Reviews today.
- 3.3 The three reports from the Reviews conducted in respect of the Extraordinary Audit and presented for Members consideration today are:
- Review of Record Keeping (plus appendix) by Professor Gordon Anthony BL – recommendation 3.
  - Review of Land and Property (plus appendix) by Stephen Mungavin, Integritas – recommendations 2 and 5.
  - Review of Governance (plus appendix) by Stephen Mungavin, Integritas – recommendation 1.

Members are invited to consider each of the reports in turn and then return to the recommendations in section 4 of this report.

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Council agreed to accept and progress with the recommendations of the Extraordinary Audit in full and the Implementation Team has made good progress. Council is presented with three reports today and following consideration of each of these reports, it is recommended that Council:
- i. Accept the report of the Review of Record Keeping and agree to develop an Implementation Plan in respect of the recommendations;
  - ii. Accept the report of the Review of Land and Property and agree to develop an Implementation Plan in respect of the recommendations;
  - iii. Accept the report of the Review of Governance and agree to develop an Implementation Plan in respect of the recommendations;
  - iv. Send a copy of the reports to the Department for Communities confirming that Council has taken forward all of the steps expected and will now proceed to develop Implementation Plans to address the recommendations of the Reviews of Record Keeping, Land and Property and Governance.
- 4.2 In respect of Recommendations 6 and 7, Council is requested to note that Council appointed the Local Government Staff Commission to take these confidential matters forward on its behalf and that progress continues to be made.