

## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting of the Governance Committee held on Tuesday 15 July 2025 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG**

**Present:** Councillors L Lewis (Chair), N Page (Vice-Chair), C Chikandamina, S J Reynolds, R Tyrrell and O Vickers

**In Attendance:** L Gordon (Member Support Officer), R Phillips (Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy Service Delivery Manager) and M Wallace (Member Support Officer)

### **GOV23 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Shaun Davies MP and Bill Tomlinson.

### **GOV24 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **GOV25 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.**

### **GOV26 Governance Terms of Reference 2025/26**

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy presented the 2025/2026 municipal year Terms of Reference. Members were advised that at the Annual Council meeting in May 2025, delegated authority had been granted to each Committee to review their Terms of Reference. The Committee heard that there had been no proposed changes to the Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix A of the report. Following the update Members voted on the recommendation.

**RESOLVED - that the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix A be agreed and reconfirmed for the 2025/2026 municipal year.**

### **GOV27 Annual Member Training & Development Review**



Members received an update on the Member Learning and Development Programme 2023–2027, which was currently in its Continuing Professional Development phase.

The Mayor and Member Support Officer advised that the programme had been refreshed ahead of the May 2023 elections and was structured around four key phases: induction, being an effective councillor, roles and responsibilities, and ongoing development.

Members were informed that several new initiatives had been introduced as part of the refresh, including early candidate communications, a two-day registration event, personal development plans (PDPs), and a Directorate Showcase. Induction packs were distributed to Members on election night, and feedback mechanisms have been embedded throughout the programme to support continuous improvement.

The Committee heard that feedback on the programme had been positive overall, with training sessions receiving an average rating of 4.5 out of 5. Members expressed a preference for evening and virtual sessions, reflecting that over 60% of Councillors are in full- or part-time employment. Feedback from Members had also indicated that more accessible online training, additional inclusions such as planning basics for all Members and drop-in sessions with council teams would be beneficial in future programmes.

The Mayor & Member Support Officer noted that there had been a decline in attendance at training sessions, which had promoted proposals for mandatory in person training to take place during Councillor registration. It had also been proposed that personal development plans be included in induction packs with explanatory notes, with the hopes of improving uptake.

Members heard that the phased approach was expected to continue into the 2027-2031 programme, with a focus on accessible and flexible training formats. Officers were exploring options for recorded sessions and utilising online platforms such as Councillor Connect and Ollie to create online modules. The Mayor & Member Support Officer advised that the Governance Committee will receive regular updates on the progress of this and would be asked to formally approve the 2027-2031 programme in 2026.

During the discussion Members reiterated that they had agreed with the positive feedback and noted that they had found the training offering to be very beneficial. The Committee suggested that it would be helpful if flexible training options could be introduced ahead of the 2027-2031 programme's approval. Officers assured Member's that alternative training options will be introduced as they are functional.

Members thanked the Mayor & Member Support Officer and noted the update.



## **GOV28 Constitution Update Report**

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy informed Members that set out within the Terms of Reference of the Governance Committee was the responsibilities to consider proposed changes to the Constitution and, if appropriate, to make recommendations to Full Council to adopt them.

Members were advised that after a thorough review, the revised Constitution was set out in Appendix A. The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy informed the Committee that it had been restructured so that it was now modular, with a view of reducing the complexity, enhancing document navigation and enabling key points to be identified with greater ease. There had also been changes to the terminology used within the Constitution, with references to 'Leader and Cabinet' being changed to 'the Executive' to mirror legislation.

During the debate there was a discussion around the notice period for submitting amendments to motions which was outlined in the Constitution as four hours prior to a meeting. Members noted that adequate time was needed to both draft and prepare to respond to proposed amendments.

Following further discussion, Cllr Rachael Tyrrell formally moved the amendment to extend the notice period to 7 working days.

No seconder was received, and therefore the amendment was not considered further.

**RESOLVED** – the adoption of the revised and updated Constitution be recommended to Full Council.

## **GOV29 National Cases Update**

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy provided the Committee with an overview of recent cases that had occurred nationally. Members heard that a Councillor in Southampton had been deemed in breach of the code of conduct by making derogatory comments about the Chief Executive Officer to the Returning Officer. The investigation into this incident cost the Council £18,000.

Members heard that the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk had an incident where a Councillor was unable to attend a Planning Committee



meeting, but had requested that another Councillor refused the application. The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy noted that whilst in this case there was no evidence that the Councillors request would have affected the outcome, it was found that this was the intention, and so it constituted a breach of the planning code and the code of conduct.

Members noted the update.

The meeting ended at 6.29 pm

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** Wednesday 8 October 2025