



GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance Committee held on Wednesday 12 July 2023 at 6.00 pm in Fourth Floor, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors H Rhodes (Chair), I Preece (Vice-Chair), P Davis, A D McClements, S A W Reynolds, W L Tomlinson and R Tyrrell

In Attendance: A Lowe (Director: Policy & Governance), R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager, Legal & Democracy) P Starkey (Member Support Officer) and M Wallace (Member Support Officer)

Apologies: None.

GOV-1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Due to the creation of the new Governance Committee, only one member from the former Council Constitution Committee, Standards Committee and Member Development Steering Group was present at the meeting. Therefore, Members agreed that the previous minutes of these Committees to be noted.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Standards Committee on 5 October 2022, Council Constitution Committee on 10 January 2023 and Member Development Steering Group on 9 February 2023 be noted as a true record of the meeting.

GOV-2 Declarations of Interest

None.

GOV-3 Terms of Reference

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy presented the report outlining the Governance Committee Terms of Reference.

The Governance Committee had been newly formed for the 2023 – 2027 administrative term and is responsible for undertaking the functions of the Council Constitution Committee, Standards Committee and Member Development Steering Group that had been in place prior to May 2023.

There is a requirement within the Council's Constitution for all Committees to annually review their terms of reference at their first meeting of the municipal year, following annual Council.



Upon being put to the vote it was, unanimously:

RESOLVED – that the draft terms of reference for the Governance Committee be agreed and adopted for the 2023/24 municipal year.

GOV-4 Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints Update

The Director: Policy & Governance presented the Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints Update report.

Members were asked to note the activity that had been undertaken by the Council's Monitoring Officer in relation to complaints received under the Councillor Code of Conduct arrangements during the 2022/23 municipal year.

In July 2021, a meeting of Full Council saw the adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct and since that time, it has been used by the Monitoring Officer when complaints had been received about the conduct of elected members across the Borough. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring the Code of Conduct is upheld and for dealing with complaints made pursuant to the Code of Conduct in relation to Borough Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors.

The arrangements for Standards Complaints and Investigation Process, which was adopted by the Standards Committee in September 2022 sets out how the Monitoring Officer deals with complaints that have been received through consultation with the Council's independent persons.

Although there was legal requirement to report the number of complaints made to the Monitoring Officer to the Committee, it was considered best practice to do so. Members were informed that the table at Appendix A of the report provided anonymised details in relation to the complaints received during the 2022/23 municipal year, including a brief synopsis of the nature of the complaint and the outcome.

Upon being put to the vote it was, unanimously:

RESOLVED – that the update on complaints received under the Councillor Code of Conduct during the 2022/23 municipal year be noted.

GOV-5 Monitoring Officer and Governance Update

The Director: Policy & Governance presented the Monitoring Officer and Governance Update report.

Members were informed that the report contained several governance-related matters including changes affecting Committees which were due to be



presented to Full Council on 13 July 2023. Recommendations A – D as described in the report related to the Terms of Reference for the Governance Committee and Audit Committee and that authority was delegated to each Committee to update the terms of reference as necessary. The remaining recommendations, as outlined in the report looked at the changes made to the Members' Allowance Scheme and the detailed work carried out in relation to Member development and the induction process, including the creation of the new Councillor Connect webpages.

A question was raised in relation to declaring an interest in respect of the changes to special responsibility allowances as an opposition group leader.

The Director: Policy & Governance confirmed that Members would need to declare an interest for the item at the meeting and leave the room for the duration of the debate.

Upon being put to the vote it was, unanimously:

RESOLVED – that:

- a) the Terms of Reference for the Governance Committee be noted;
- b) the recommendations for Full Council to delegate authority to the Governance Committee to approve its own Terms of Reference be noted;
- c) the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee be noted;
- d) the recommendations for Full Council to delegate authority to the Audit Committee to approve its own Terms of Reference be noted;
- e) the updated Members' Allowance Scheme be noted;
- f) the work undertaken to date in respect of Member Induction be noted;
- g) the details relating to the new Councillor Connect webpages be noted;
- h) the work undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Committees during the period 2022/23 be noted;
- i) the forthcoming changes in respect of electoral administration be noted;
- j) the delay of the return of the Independent Remuneration Panel until January 2025 be noted; and



- k) recommendations for Full Council to delegate authority to the Governance Committee to establish an IRP to commence work in January 2025 be noted.

GOV-6 Constitution Update

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy presented the Constitution Update report outlining the ongoing work to review the Council's Constitution and the recommendations for the revised Constitution to be adopted by Full Council.

Members were asked to refer to the copy of the draft Constitution contained within the report and to note the suggested changes made which were highlighted in red. These changes included the insertion of Simon Froud as the new Director: Adult Social Care, the amendment of the main business address from Addenbrooke House to Darby House, the creation of the Governance Committee, the revised terms of reference for the Health and Wellbeing Board and changes to the Cabinet rules, making it clear that the Council rules of debate apply to the meeting, bringing Cabinet in line with all of the Council's other committees and ensuring clarity and consistency in meeting procedures.

Upon being put to the vote it was, unanimously:

RESOLVED – RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL that the revised Constitution be adopted.

GOV-7 Member Learning and Development Update

The Member Support Team presented a verbal update on the progress of the Member Learning and Development Programme and the Member Induction process following the local elections in May 2023.

Members were asked to note the training sessions that had taken place so far as part of the first theme of the programme. The next theme of the programme is due to start delivery from September following the recess period. Further training sessions on topics such as Code of Conduct, Corporate Parenting, Planning and Licensing are in the process of being arranged for Members who had been unable to attend previously.

Members were also provided with an update in relation to the Named Support Officer offer and the invitation for all elected members to participate in a personal development plan to identify personal developmental needs following the first 6 months of their term in office.



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Feedback captured through the use of Microsoft Forms had shown positive engagement from Members in the training offer available. Members felt that the development and learning programme was the most comprehensive programme of training that had been available and offered their thanks to Officers for their professionalism and support since their election to office and during the induction process.

A question was asked in relation to 121 support and mentoring for members who require additional support.

The Director: Policy & Governance thanked Members for their feedback and advised that the programme had been co-produced with the support of the former Member Development Steering Group. As the Member Support Team is a small team, it is not possible to offer 121 to all elected members, however Officers would engage with members who they felt would benefit from additional support and this would be identified through the introduction of personal development plans.

The meeting ended at 6.31 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday 5 October 2023