



GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance Committee held on Wednesday 10 April 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

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

In Attendance: L Gordon (Mayor & Member Support Officer), J Lynch (Independent Persons), R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager, Legal & Democracy), L Stanway (Interim Service Delivery Manager, Community Services), T Senior (Independent Persons) and M Wallace (Mayor & Member Support Officer)

GOV1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Shirley Reynolds and Bill Tomlinson.

GOV2 Declarations of Interest

None.

GOV3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

GOV4 Member Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Training

The Chair informed the Committee that on 11 October 2023 the Communities Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Governance Committee consider whether the Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) module should be recommended learning for all Councillors.

The Interim Service Delivery Manager: Community Services advised the Committee that in July 2022 the Council had launched a new four-year Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. This strategy set the Council's commitment as a large local employer and as a provider and commissioner of services to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across the borough. The strategy had four main areas of focus: leadership, partnership, and organisational commitment, having a diverse workforce, having accessible and responsive services and celebrating diversity. Members heard that the strategy was supported by a cross-organisational action plan and that annual



updates were to be presented to Cabinet. The Interim Service Delivery Manager: Community Services informed Members that following the first progress report an update was presented to the Communities Scrutiny in October 2023. The Committee welcomed the Strategy and recognised the important role that Members play in this agenda. During the Communities Scrutiny meeting, Members of the Committee discussed ways to encourage all elected members to complete basic EDI training as part of their role and induction, feeling that further training was beneficial to help Members better understand the legal position and the role they play in supporting their communities. As a result of this discussion the Communities Scrutiny Committee put forward a recommendation that the Governance Committee review Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training as part of all Councillor's required learning.

The Interim Service Delivery Manager: Community Services advised that should the Committee agree the recommendation, a new training module would need to be developed especially tailored for Members and that it would be completed via Ollie, the Council's online training platform. Members heard that in addition to online training, the Community Services team would also deliver more detailed face to face training to give Members the opportunity to ask questions, explore scenarios and receive support if needed.

Members expressed their endorsement for the recommendation, highlighting the importance of understanding their communities and staying up to date with the latest information. During the discussion the Committee noted that many employers, including the Council had deemed Equality and Diversity training to be mandatory for their staff and felt that this should also be the case for elected Members.

The Committee welcomed both face to face and online training options and stressed the need for real life examples to be used in these sessions.

RESOLVED - that the Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training be recommended learning for all Councillors.

GOV5 Member Learning & Development Update Report

The Mayor and Member Support Officer informed Members that since the last meeting of the Governance Committee in January 2024, the Member Support Team had carried out a review of all Member's attendance across the entirety of the learning & development programme to date. At the conclusion of this review all non-executive Members had been sent an email detailing their training record, including any required learning courses that they were yet to complete. Also included in this email was the Personal Development Plan template to complete should they wish to, and an updated feedback form. The Mayor and Member Support Officer explained that the feedback form allowed



members to provide feedback on the programme as whole, rather than rating specific sessions as Members have been invited to complete previously. The Committee heard that through Member feedback the team had been able to identify additional key areas to provide further training, such as Zivver, MyTelford and the Member Enquiry process.

Members were advised that the next stage of the training programme would prioritise Committee specific training following the Council's Annual General Meeting in May 2024, followed by required learning modules such as Code of Conduct, after which there would be a variety of Continued Professional Development sessions available. The Mayor and Member Support Officer noted that the team would also be continuing to work towards the Local Government Association Member Development Charter and Charter Plus.

GOV6 Constitution Update

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal and Democracy informed the Committee that the Council had recently received grant funding from the Local Government Association to review the Constitution. With this funding the Council had employed the services of an external solicitor who will consider the format of the document and ensure that it was compliant with both best practice and legal requirements. Members were advised this was also to include a downloadable version of the Council's rules of debate.

The Committee heard that any recommended changes to the Constitution would be brought to the Governance Committee for consideration in the next municipal year.

GOV7 Registers of Interest Update

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal and Democracy advised the Committee that the Register of Interests fell within the oversight of the Committee and that following the local elections in May 2023 all Councillors elected to Town, Parish or Borough Councils were required under the Localism Act to report any interests within 28 days, or within 28 days of a new interest occurring. Members were informed that the monitoring officer had at the time of the meeting received returned interests from all Town, Parish and Borough Councillors, either directly or through the relevant clerks.

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal and Democracy advised the Committee that this was an ongoing task and would be continuously updated.

The meeting ended at 6.28 pm

Chairman:



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

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to create a better borough**

Date: Wednesday 2 October 2024