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Co-operative Council

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GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance Committee held on Wednesday 2 October 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors A S Jhawar (Chair), P Davis, S Davies, S J Reynolds, W L Tomlinson, R Tyrrell and O Vickers

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

Apologies: Councillor A R H England

GOV8 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Arnold England and Julia Lynch.

GOV9 Declarations of Interest

None.

GOV10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair

GOV11 Terms of Reference 2024/25 - Governance Committee

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy provided the Committee with an overview of the updated Terms of Reference of the Governance Committee for the 2024/35 municipal year.

The Committee were advised that at the Annual General Meeting of Council each Committee had been given delegated authority to confirm their own Terms of Reference. Members were asked to note that there had been no changes for 2024/2025.

RESOLVED – that the Terms of Reference for Governance Committee be agreed and reconfirmed.

GOV12 Governance Committee Forward Plan 2024/2025



The Mayor & Member Support Officer provided Members of the Committee with an overview of the Governance Committee Forward plan for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

Members heard that the forward plan set out future agenda items to be brought to the Committee. The Mayor & Member Support Officer highlighted that the Terms of Reference for the Committee outlined that it had oversight over the Council's Constitution, Standards and the Code of Conduct, and Member Development. Members heard how the forward plan set out how each of these areas would be addressed by the Committee over the course of the municipal year. It was noted that the forward plan was subject to change should any urgent matters arise.

RESOLVED - that the Governance Committee Forward Plan 2024/2025 be reviewed and agreed.

GOV13 Member Support Update

Members heard that since the last meeting of the Committee in April 2024, the focus of the Member Training and Development Programme had been required learning. The Mayor & Member Support Officer advised that this had included hosting repeat sessions for committee specific training such as Audit and Planning Committees that Members were required to complete prior to being allowed to sit on that Committee. There were also additional plans for a further Planning training session and an Appeals Committee session for those Members who had not yet received training. Members were asked to note that repeat sessions for other required learning modules such as the role of Councillors as a corporate parent had also already taken place. The Mayor and Member Support Officer informed Members that these repeat sessions would continue towards the end of the municipal year, with an additional focus on sessions highlighted by Members in their feedback.

The Mayor and Member Support Officer reiterated how important Member feedback was to ensure an engaging and robust training programme. The Committee heard that in pursuit of continued improvement of the programme, all Members were to be asked to complete a brief feedback questionnaire at the next full council meeting in November 2024. Members were advised that the questions were to be focused on overall satisfaction with the training programme, preferred training delivery methods, and a request for suggestions as to what could be changed or added to the Member training and support offer.

Members commented that the current Member Development Programme was more comprehensive than any previous training provided by the Council. The Committee noted that the process of Councillor induction had been more thorough and engaging, with additions such as the Directorates showcase



having a significant impact for Councillors who were elected for their first term in office in May 2023.

During the discussion Members expressed that having a combination of both in person and virtual training sessions had been beneficial, however added that having pre-recorded or online training modules would provide even greater flexibility for Members to access training at their own convenience via Councillor Connect.

The Mayor and Member Support Officer thanked the Committee for their comments and continued support for the Member Training and Development Programme.

GOV14 Annual Report on the Committee for Standards in Public Life 2024/2025

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy informed Members of the Committee that each year the committee was required to receive the Annual Report of the Committee for Standards in Public life.

Members discussed the contents of the report and noted that this was particularly interesting in the context of updated legislation.

RESOLVED – that the Governance Committee note the contents of Annual Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

GOV15 Constitution Update

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy provided the Committee with an update on the ongoing work to make the Council's Constitution more accessible to Members, officers and the public. Members heard that significant work had been undertaken by an external solicitor, who had confirmed that the information outlined in the constitution was correct.

The Committee were advised that as the final part of their review, the external solicitor were still to check the contract procedural around finance and procurement based on updated government legislation. Once this review is completed, the Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy informed Members that the revised constitution would be brought back to the Governance Committee for comment, following which the Committee will then be asked to recommend the updated constitution to full council.

Members noted the update.



GOV16 National Cases Update

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy provider Members of the Committee with two recent examples of Councillor code of conduct breaches nationally. These examples included a West Suffolk Councillor who failed to comply with the sanctions imposed on them after breaching the code of conduct, which resulted in the breach being reported to full council. The other case involved a Councillor from Pendle Council who was found to have disrespected fellow council members by the Standards Committee. The councillor involved was required to issue an apology.

Members noted the update.

The meeting ended at 6.23 pm

Chairman:

Date: Wednesday 15 January 2025