



## **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Governance Committee held on Friday 28 March 2025 at 4.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG**

**Present:** Councillors A R H England (Vice-Chair), S Davies, S J Reynolds, W L Tomlinson and O Vickers

**In Attendance:** L Gordon (Member Support Officer), A Lowe (Director: Policy & Governance) T Senior (Independent Persons) and M Wallace (Member Support Officer)

**Apologies:** Councillor A S Jhawar, P Davis and R Tyrrell

#### **GOV18    Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **GOV19    Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED –** that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair

#### **GOV20    Councillor Connect Update**

The Mayor & Member Support Officers provided the Committee with an overview of the Councillor Connect Portal. Members heard that the Councillor Connect Portal was developed as part of the new Member Development Strategy in 2023 and was created to allow Councillors to access information relevant to their role with ease. The contents of the portal included meeting and training updates, staff contact details, links to policies and forms as well as links to external organisations such as the LGA and the LGIU.

Following the presentation Members asked about plans for future training sessions to be recorded and available through the Councillor Connect Portal. The Mayor & Member Support Officer advised that discussions regarding which training sessions were suitable for recording were ongoing, and that Members would be updated in due course. The Committee asked if it would be possible for additional ward specific information to be included and were advised by the Mayor & Member Support Officer that Census BI and Insight data was accessible through the 'know your ward' section of the portal, but the team would continue to monitor the number of views to the portal and look at building additional resources tailored to individual wards.



Members noted the update.

## **GOV21    National Cases Update**

The Director: Policy & Governance provided the Committee with an overview of a recent case that had occurred nationally. Members heard that a Councillor at Torridge District Council had been jailed for 18 weeks on two counts for harassment of the local authority's head of legal and governance. The Director: Policy & Governance advised the Committee that in their sentencing the Judge had highlighted the importance of the public role of Councillors and the need to uphold the code of conduct.

The Director: Policy & Governance informed Members that the Committee for Standards in Public Life had recently recommended that it be mandatory for all Councils to adopt the Model Code of Conduct, as outlined in the Standards in Public Life report of 2019. The Committee heard that although Telford & Wrekin Council had adopted the model Code of Conduct in July 2021, any additional recommendations from the Committee in Standards in Public Life would be brought for consideration of the Governance Committee.

During the discussion Members questioned the processes in place should any Councillor be convicted of an offence. The Director: Policy & Governance advised that should this occur, a risk assessment would be carried out by the Monitoring Officer.

Members noted the update.

## **GOV22    Standards Cases Update**

The Director: Policy & Governance provided the Committee with an update on the activity of the Council's Monitoring Officer in relation to complaints received under the Councillor Code of Conduct arrangements during the 2024/25 Municipal Year, as outlined in Appendix A. Members Heard that the Monitoring Officer was responsible for ensuring the Code of Conduct was upheld and for dealing with complaints made pursuant to the Code of Conduct regarding Borough Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors from across the Borough. All complaints were dealt with, in accordance with the arrangements for Standards Complaints and Investigation Process which were adopted by the Council in September 2022.

The Committee were advised that it was not a legal requirement to bring this report to the Committee, however it was considered best practice in light of transparency.



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Members noted the update and asked if there had been any increase in the number on complaints received on the previous year. The Director: Policy & Governance informed Members that although there had been an increase in the number of complaints received for 2024/2025, this was not indicative of a worsening in behaviour, and could be accounted for by a greater awareness of the complaints procedure. Members heard that a number of complaints had not progressed due to insignificant evidence, or they had been withdrawn. The Independent Persons added that both at Telford & Wrekin Council and other authorities the complaints registered were often based on service provided rather than code of conduct and can be better addressed through other avenues.

The meeting ended at 4.23 pm

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

**Date:** Wednesday 11 June 2025