

Constitution and Ethics Committee Minutes

Date: 18 June 2024

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Venue: Red Kite Room, New Shire Hall

Present: Councillors Simon Bywater, Piers Coutts, Lorna Dupré, Edna Murphy and Sebastian Kindersley

64. Election of Vice-Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Bywater, seconded by Councillor Dupré and resolved unanimously, to elect Councillor Kindersley as the Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2024-25.

65. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillors David Ambrose Smith (substituted by Councillor Bywater), Doug Dew (substituted by Councillor Coutts) and John Gowing.

It was confirmed that Members were able to discuss the Members' Code of Conduct, and there were no declarations of interest.

66. Minutes – 23 April 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chair.

67. Local Government Association's (LGA) Model of Code of Conduct

The Committee received a report which proposed the adoption of the Local Government Association's (LGA) Model Code of Conduct, attached at Appendix 2 of this report, to replace the Council's current Members' Code of Conduct. Appendix C of the LGA Model Code of Conduct had not been included in the version published in the agenda, and it was confirmed that this would be incorporated in the version for Full Council if the Committee decided to recommend its adoption.

While discussing the report, Members welcomed the proposal, noting that its adoption by other councils in the area would particularly benefit councillors who sat on more than one authority. It was also suggested that the additional clarity it provided would assist Members, as well as the Monitoring Officer when undertaking investigations.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Recommend to Council the adoption of the Local Government Association's Model Code of Conduct, attached at Appendix 2 of this report, to replace the Council's current Members' Code of Conduct.

68. Proposed Changes to the Constitution

The Committee received a report detailing proposed changes to the Constitution, including an additional authority for the Adults and Health Committee to establish Task and Finish groups, and the removal of the requirement for the Council to agree the Scheme of Delegation at its annual meeting.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Recommend the following changes to the Constitution, as set out in Section 2 of the report, to Full Council:

- (i) Authority for the Adults and Health Committee to establish Task and Finish groups; and
- (ii) Removal of the requirement for the Council to agree the Scheme of Delegation at its annual meeting.

69. A Review of the Complaints Received Under the Members' Code of Conduct

The Committee received a report which provided an overview of the complaints received under the Code of Conduct from 23 April to 31 May 2024, and which also included details of other complaints that were already in process or had been concluded. Two new complaints that had been received were being assessed, while two previously ongoing complaints continued to be under investigation.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the contents of the report.

70. Constitution and Ethics Committee Agenda Plan

While discussing the agenda plan, Members were informed that following the recent publication of new guidance on good governance of council-owned companies, a review of the Council's governance framework was being undertaken by the Assets and Procurement Committee. Any proposed changes would be presented to the Constitution and Ethics Committee at its meeting in September 2024.

It was resolved to note the agenda plan.

Chair
5 September 2024