

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

11 June 2025 at 7.15pm

Present:

Councillor K. Franks (Chair)

Councillors H. Ayres, I. Fuller, R. Lee, M. Steel and A. Thompson

Also in attendance –

Parish Councillor K. Golla

Independent Person –

Mr P Jeremiah

Ms P Mills

Ms C Gosling

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillors K Bentley and P Jackson, and Councillor S Young. Cllr R Lee substituting for Cllr S Young.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda, none were made.

4. Public Question Time

No questions or statements were received from members of the public.

5. Chair's Announcements

No Announcements were received.

6. Monitoring Officer Report

The Monitoring Officer presented an update on standards complaints and investigations for the period of January 2025 to June 2025.

The Committee was advised that since publication of the agenda one additional complaint had been received. It was shared that this complaint was in the early stages and would be added to the report to the next Governance Committee.

The two newly elected Councillors had completed their register of interest forms.

In response to questions the Committee was advised that there was no apparent pattern in the number of complaints received compared to previous years and that the amount of complaints varies from year to year. In comparison to other local authorities, it was shared that Chelmsford had a smaller amount of parish councils compared to other areas and the Monitoring Officer was more concerned with the substance of complaints rather than the amount received. It was suggested that training on the complaints procedure was being considered but was likely to be delayed due to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

RESOLVED that the update be noted and the standards enquiries and investigations statistics for the period of January-June 2025 be published online.

(7.15pm to 7.22pm)

7. Proposed Constitution Changes

The committee received a report detailing the recommendations for proposed changes to the constitution.

The committee heard that there were a large number of changes to the constitution proposed, including a review of financial matters, clarifying the distinction between executive and non-executive decisions, changes that arose from the deletion of the Procurement and Risk Manager and, delegation to officers and other minor amendments.

The Cabinet considered these amendments at the meeting held on the 3rd June 2025 and were approved without amendments.

Some further minor amendments would be necessary, including at least one discovered since publication of the agenda. The normal process for minor amendments would be followed in relation to these and post Full Council the Chair would be consulted and Governance Committee notified.

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Constitution be recommend to full council for approval.

(7.22pm to 7.26pm)

8. Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

The committee heard an update regarding the Council's position relating to the adoption of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) complaint handling code.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

(7.26pm to 7.33pm)

9. Annual Report of the Governance Committee 2024/25

The Committee received the annual report of the Governance Committee, outlining the work of the Committee for the last municipal year.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report of the Governance Committee for 2024/25 be approved and submitted to Full Council.

(7.33pm to 7.34pm)

10. Multi-Hatted Councillor Dispensation Report

The committee received a report which would allow for a dispensation to enable any multi-hatted member to fully participate in decision making and scrutiny including speaking, voting, and in relation to cabinet members, taking executive decisions as necessary. This would include items of business relating to devolution, LGR and community governance.

Members were made aware that the Monitoring Officer had granted a dispensation, in consultation with an independent person, to allow the multi-hatted Governance Committee members to vote on this matter.

RESOLVED that the dispensation be approved for a period of 4 years, or in the event that the Council be abolished in April 2028 (as a result of local government reorganisation), whichever is the sooner.

(7.34pm to 7.36pm)

11. Work Programme

The Committee received an update on the work programme for 2025/26.

RESOLVED that the work programme of the Committee be noted.

(7.36pm to 7.37pm)

12. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7:37pm

Chair