

MINUTES

of the

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

held on 20 January 2021 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor H. Ayres (Chair)

Councillors R.H. Ambor, K. Bentley, N.A. Dudley, D.G. Jones, N.M Walsh and I. Wright

Also in attendance –
Parish Councillors Chiswell, Jackson and Saltmarsh
Designated Independent Persons
Mrs C. Gosling
Mrs P. Mills

1. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

No apologies for absence were received or substitutions made.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interests

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 were asked or statements made.

5. Chairs Announcements

No announcements were made.

6. Monitoring Officer Report

The Committee received a report updating them on progress with standards regime issues. It was noted by the Committee that four new complaints had recently been received

regarding the same Parish Council. The Committee was also informed that the model code of conduct had been received and officers were awaiting the accompanying guidance. It was noted that a joint working approach across Essex was being pursued and a common approach across Councils and different tiers would be very helpful. The Committee was informed that the matter would be looked at by the Constitution Working group, along with the Governance Committee. It was also confirmed that Parish and Town Councils would be notified of the City Council's approach.

RESOLVED that;

1. the report be noted and;
2. the current statistical information as to complaints made be published on the Councils website.

(7.01pm to 7.07pm)

7. Gifts and Hospitality Report

The Committee received a report updating them on offers of Gifts and Hospitality in 2020 for both Members and Officers. It was noted that one record had been made for a Councillor and two for Officers. The Committee heard that the Committee on Standards in Public Life had recommended that the information on Councillors should be published quarterly online. The Committee agreed to follow the best practice recommendation and to publish the information online quarterly to improve transparency.

In response to questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that the names of junior officers were not published in the report for data protection reasons, but senior officers would be.

RESOLVED that;

1. the report be noted and;
2. the register of Gifts and Hospitality for Councillors be updated quarterly and published on the Council's website.

(7.08pm to 7.16pm)

8. Work Programme

The Committee received a report informing them of their future work programme. The Committee were informed that some changes to the future meeting schedule would be required to accommodate the Community Governance Review. Members were informed that the March meeting was likely to be moved to July and that this would be confirmed soon.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(7.17pm to 7.18pm)

9. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business to discuss

The meeting closed at 7.18pm.

Chair