

Attendance

Members of the Governance Committee

Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE (Chair)
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Ian Brookfield
Cllr Celia Hibbert
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Wendy Thompson

Employees

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Dereck Francis | Democratic Services Officer |
| Jaswinder Kaur | Democratic Services Manager |
| Martyn Sargeant | Head of Governance |

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. Title

- 1 **Apologies**
Apologies for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Craig Collingswood.
- 2 **Declarations of Interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting of the Special Advisory Group - 16 November 2018**
Resolved:
That subject to the inclusion of 'Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE' in the list of apologies received for the meeting, the minutes of the meeting of the Special Advisory Group held on 16 November 2018 be noted.
- 4 **Matters arising**
With reference to Minute 5 (Situation of Polling Stations for 2019 Local Elections), the Head of Governance reported that the formal stage of the polling place review would commence in the coming weeks. A report on progress and final proposals would be submitted to future meetings of the Committee. The Head of Governance also reported that the Council had been notified by the Boundary Commission of its intention to undertake a review of the Council's ward boundaries and the number of Councillors during 2019-2020 with a view to implementation of any proposed changes in 2021.

Councillor Stephen Simkins asked whether the suggestion made at the previous meeting, that Bilston Town Hall be used as a polling station would go ahead. The Head of Governance reported that it could be picked up during the polling places review.

5 **Parental Leave Policy**

Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE presented the report on a proposal to recommend to Council that it introduces a parental leave policy.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve the Parental Leave Policy.

6 **Appointment of Councillor Champions**

Councillor Ian Brookfield presented the report on proposals to make appointments to the position of Councillor Champions for Digital Innovation, Climate Change and Wolverhampton for Everyone.

Members of the Committee welcomed the proposals. Councillor Stephen Simkins also suggested that Councillor Champions should come under the scrutiny process and that consideration should be given to appointing a Councillor Champion for the West Midlands Combined Authority. Jaswinder Kaur, Head of Democratic Services informed the Committee that one of the current requirements of the Councillor Champion role was to report to the Scrutiny Board every six months on the activities of their Advisory Group. The Head of Democratic Services also reported that work was ongoing on a refresh of the role of Councillor Champions.

Councillor Wendy Thompson commented that all Councillors should be champions for climate change and for digital innovation, and on that basis, she did not agree that the roles warranted a Special Responsibility Allowance. She also suggested that as part of the Council's response to Climate Change, it should consider signing up to no air travel.

Martyn Sargeant, Head of Governance responded to questions on the achievements of the current Councillor Champions and the costs of the proposals. He reported that the Equalities Member Champion and Equalities Advisory Group led on a strand of work that helped the Council achieve the grade 'Excellent' following an Equality Framework for Local Government Peer Review Assessment. The Councillor Development and Information Technology Advisory Group's role was to lead councillor development and induction programmes. Their work had helped inform the Councillor development programme in recent years. In terms of the additional costs from the proposals for the three posts of member champions, there was flexibility within the existing budget set aside for all Councillor allowances within Democratic Services to fund the proposals.

Resolved:

1. That Council be recommended to appoint Councillor Champions for Digital Innovation, Climate Change and Wolverhampton for Everyone.
2. That Council be recommended to note:
 - a. That the term IT would be removed from the Councillor Champion for Councillor Development and IT title to avoid any confusion.

- b. That the Councillor Champion for Climate Change will Chair the Sustainability Advisory Group which would be renamed Climate Change Advisory Group.

7 **Friendship Agreement with Arjun dhara Municipality, Nepal**

Martyn Sargeant, Head of Governance presented the report on an approach which had been made to the Council to enter into a friendship agreement with the Arjun dhara Municipality, situated in the south-east of Nepal.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to agree to the proposed friendship agreement with the Arjun dhara Municipality in Nepal.

8 **Conferring the Title of Honorary Alderman**

The Committee considered a report in relation to whether to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Peter O'Neill and on former Councillor Tersaim Singh. The Committee were in support of the proposals.

Martyn Sargeant, Head of Governance reported that following publication of the agenda for the meeting, there was uncertainty as to whether Mr Tersaim Singh now wished to be considered for Honorary Alderman. Clarification would be sought from him prior to the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 17 July 2019.

Resolved:

That an extraordinary meeting of the Council be convened on 17 July 2019 to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillors Peter O'Neill and Tersaim Singh.

9 **Time of Future Meetings**

Resolved:

That the commencement time of meetings of the Committee during the remainder of the 2019'2020 Municipal Year be changed to 10 am.