

Governance and Ethics Committee

Minutes - 25 February 2022

Attendance

Members of the Governance and Ethics Committee

Cllr John Reynolds (Chair)
Cllr Jonathan Crofts (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Dr Paul John Birch J.P.
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Celia Hibbert
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE
Cllr Simon Bennett
Cllr Wendy Thompson

Employees

David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Laura Noonan	Electoral Services Manager
Donna Cope	Democratic Services Officer
Jacob Stokes	Democratic Services Assistant

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
There were no apologies for absence submitted.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting**
Minute 7 – Councillor Milkinder Jaspal stated that he requested the number of properties for each constituency and ward, not canvassing data.

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 January 2022 be approved as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

4 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

5 **Local Government Boundary Commission for England report Implementation Plan**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the report on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Implementation Plan. The report outlined the next steps for implementing the LGBCE recommendations and set out a proposed timeline for the polling district and polling place review.

Laura Noonan, Electoral Services Manager, highlighted the key implementation dates and explained the two stage process for the polling district and polling place formal review.

It was noted that all ward councillors would be invited to provide feedback on the existing polling arrangements following the May 2022 election, and that the final proposals would be brought back to Committee for consideration.

Councillor John Reynolds moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Jonathan Crofts seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed timetable for the formal review be approved.
2. That the two stages of the polling district and polling place review be noted.

6 **Conferring the Title of Honorary Alderman**

Councillor John Reynolds moved the recommendation in the report. Councillor Jonathan Crofts seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

1. That Council be recommended to convene an extraordinary meeting on the 6 April 2022 to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor John Rowley.

7 **Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, presented the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The report outlined the review undertaken by the Panel on councillor allowances and detailed their recommendations.

A typographical error was noted on page 78 of the report at paragraph 4.1 where it stated that Labour currently held 46 seats. It should state 43 seats and would be amended accordingly.

The Chief Operating Officer gave a short presentation on the IRP Review outlining the key points and recommendations made by the IRP.

The report was debated by Committee, and Cllr Reynolds thanked the Independent Remuneration Panel on behalf of Members.

Councillor John Reynolds moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Rita Potter seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to:

1. Consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and approve the recommendations made by the Panel.
2. Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Scheme of Councillor Allowances according to the decisions taken by Council for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

8

Update from Monitoring Officer

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on the work programme and other matters within the scope of the Governance and Ethics Committee's remit.

The Chief Operating Officer reported that a by-election had been called following the resignation of Councillor Banger and would take place on 7 April 2022. As a result of this, the pre-election period would now start on 3 March 2022 and guidance on this would be circulated to Members and officers.

It was noted that plans for the by-election and May elections were well underway, and that a number of recommendations from Members regarding changes to polling stations had been made.

The Chief Operating Officer noted that a further freedom of the city nomination had been received and would be processed accordingly.

It was noted that improvements to the Councillor Enquiries Unit were underway and that although the latest data was positive there was still a long way to go before the unit would be entirely fit for purpose.

The Chief Operating Officer noted that the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel would go before Council on 2 March 2022, and if agreed, would be adopted after the May 2022 election.

The Chief Operating Officer noted that whilst it had been proposed to bring the Code of Conduct Annual Report to the meeting it had not been possible due to urgent matters. However, members were assured that the draft documentation would be circulated to them for consideration and that the item would be brought to the next meeting without fail.

It was noted that the social media training had been delivered and further training would be provided by the Chief Operating Officer over the next few of weeks.

The update from the Monitoring Officer was debated by Committee, and a number of key issues were raised. The Chief Operating Officer responded to questions asked and agreed to carry out the following actions:

1. Consider how the authority could show solidarity towards Ukraine through its communications and during the meeting of the Council on 2 March 2022.

2. Explore the figures provided by the Councillor Enquiries Unit and ensure they were accurate.
3. Reschedule the meeting of the Councillor Enquiries Unit working group.

Resolved:

1. That the update from the Monitoring Officer be noted.

9

Annual Report on Code of Conduct Matters

This item was deferred to the next meeting.