

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 Celia Hibbert
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr Phil Page
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Simon Bennett
Cllr Wendy Thompson

Employees

David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Laura Noonan	Electoral Services Manager
Anna Zollino-Biscotti	Information Governance Manager
Sarah Campbell	Customer Engagement Manager
Lukhvinder Sanger	Councillor Enquiries Manager
Jas Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Donna Cope	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
There were no apologies for absence received.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting**
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.
- 4 Matters arising**
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 **Information Governance - Annual SIRO Report 2021-2022**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the Information Governance Annual SIRO Report 2021-2022. The report provided an update relating to the responsibilities of the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and outlined information governance activity and performance during the 2021-22 financial year.

Anna Zollino-Biscotti, Information Governance Manager, presented an overview of the Annual SIRO Report, and provided assurance that information risks were being effectively managed. An update on information governance performance was provided; key risks and areas of improvement were highlighted; and the Information Governance Work Plan for 2022-2023 was outlined.

Members of the Committee welcomed the report and thanked officers for their hard work.

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

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the Information Governance (IG) Annual Report for SIRO 2021-2022 be noted.

6 **Annual Social Care, Public Health, Corporate Complaints & Compliments Report 2021-2022**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the Annual Social Care, Public Health, Corporate Complaints & Compliments Report 2021-2022. The report provided an overview of the complaints, including Local Government and Social Care/Housing Ombudsman enquiries, received during 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Sarah Campbell, Customer Engagement Manager, presented an overview of the Annual Report and responded to questions asked. A breakdown of the complaints received during 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 was provided along with the outcome of each case. Members were assured that all upheld complaints were considered thoroughly, and examples of the lessons learnt were noted.

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

The report was debated by Committee, and concerns were raised over the long waiting times for SEND assessments. In response to this, it was agreed that the Customer Engagement Manager would monitor the situation.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the Annual Social Care, Public Health, Complaints and Compliments Report for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 be noted.

7 **Councillor Enquiries Unit Update**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the Councillor Enquiries Unit (CEU) Update.

Lukhvinder Sanger, Councillor Enquiries Manager, outlined the CEU processes and presented a breakdown of the cases received.

Members of the Committee discussed their individual experiences of the CEU, and the Councillor Enquiries Manager replied to questions asked. Overall, it was agreed that the CEU was helpful and efficient, and that the delays experienced by members were due to individual service areas.

In response to comments made it was agreed that the delay in response time would be raised with Service Directors, and an update on the matter would be brought back to Committee.

It was further agreed that a report detailing CEU data per ward would be presented to members at a future meeting.

Resolved:

1. That the Councillor Enquiries Unit Update be noted.

8 **Democratic Engagement Update**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the report: Democratic Engagement Update. The report provided an update on the democratic engagement activities for 2022-2023.

It was noted that the Chief Executive had written to the Secretary of State requesting that the fallow year of 2025 be brought forward to 2024. A response on the matter had not been received so a reminder of the request would be issued by the Chief Operating Officer.

Laura Noonan, Electoral Services Manager, outlined the report and noted that the councillor briefing session on the Elections Act and Local Implementation Plan was now scheduled for 10 October 2022.

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

The report was debated by Committee, and it was acknowledged that some students were at a disadvantage with the Youth Elections taking place once every two years. The Electoral Services Manager responded to questions asked and agreed to raise the issue with Youth Services.

Following further consideration of the report Councillor Reynolds made the following suggestions:

1. That a letter be written to the Local Government Association (LGA) regarding the electoral registration process.
2. That future election campaign leaflets be produced in Romanian.

Resolved:

1. That the update on the democratic engagement activities for 2022-2023 be noted.

9

Update on Polling District and Polling Place Review

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the report: Update on Polling District and Polling Place Review. The report provided an update on the outcomes of the public consultation and detailed the next steps to the review.

It was noted that the public consultation had ended on Friday 26 August 2022 and the final proposals would be presented to Committee in October.

Laura Noonan, Electoral Services Manager, summarised the responses received and thanked members for their feedback. It was reported that a number of changes had been made following the feedback and the Electoral Services Manager outlined the key changes. It was proposed that 17 schools would be used as polling stations instead of the initial 14, and members were reminded that this was a reduction to the 24 schools previously used.

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

The report was debated by Committee, and some members were concerned that the number of proposed schools had risen from 14 to 17. Concerns were also raised around accessibility issues, the distance residents had to travel to vote, and the number of polling stations located outside the ward.

The Committee requested that a report detailing the proposed Blakenhall ward polling stations be brought before Committee for proper consideration.

The Chief Operating Officer responded to concerns raised and stated that the proposed number of schools was not guaranteed at this stage. He explained that other options were being explored to avoid the use of schools and that a detailed report would be presented to Committee at the next meeting on the number of schools to potentially be used and the number of schools used by neighbouring authorities.

Resolved:

1. That the outcome of the public consultation be noted.
2. That the next steps for the polling district and polling place review be noted.

10

Update on the 2022 Annual Canvass

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the report: Update on the 2022 Annual Canvass. The report outlined the progress made on the annual canvass and detailed the responses received.

Laura Noonan, Electoral Services Manager, summarised the report and responded to questions asked. She noted that contact with care homes hadn't commenced yet and reassured members that the electoral register was updated regularly.

Resolved:

1. That the progress of the 2022 annual canvass be noted.