

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
Jai Ghai	Head of Digital and IT
Laura Gittos	Head of Governance
Donna Cope	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Jaswinder Kaur and Laura Noonan.
- 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 20 October 2022 be approved as a correct record.
- 4 Matters arising**
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 5 Changes to the Constitution - Rules of Debate**
David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, presented the report: Changes to the Constitution - Rules of Debate. The report detailed the proposed amendments to the constitution to ensure continuing lawfulness and effectiveness.

The Chief Operating Officer provided an overview of the proposed changes and explained the rationale for these changes as detailed in section three of the report.

The report was debated by Committee, and it was agreed that the following amendments should be made:

1. **Leader's report – right of reply** - That there be an amendment to introduce a 2-minute right of reply from the Leader; that the Leader's report be reduced from 10 minutes to 8 minutes; that the opposition response remains at 5 minutes, thus ensuring the whole item remains at 15 minutes.
2. **Extensions of time of the meeting** – That the meeting be extended by a fixed time with no further extension under rule 8.1.
3. **Voting** – That unless the constitution provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those Councillors voting and present at the time the question was put – *for the avoidance of doubt in the event that a named vote is called (or required) only those Councillors present at the start of the named vote will be entitled to vote.*

Resolved:

1. That Council be recommended to make changes to the Constitution as set out above.

6 **Appointing an Independent Member**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, presented the report: Appointing an Independent Member. The report outlined the proposal to appoint at least two additional Independent Persons and the rationale behind it.

The report was debated by Committee, and the Chief Operating Officer responded to questions asked.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to:

1. Agree to the advertisement of two additional Independent Persons to ensure that the Council has at least two Independent Persons in line with best practice, and to delegate responsibility for agreeing the advertisement process to the Chair of the Committee.

7 **Local Authority Companies - Linked Bodies**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, presented the report: Local Authority Companies - Linked Bodies. The report provided clarity on the approach taken regarding Linked Bodies – namely those bodies that the Council had ownership (or part ownership) of.

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

The report was debated by Committee, and the Chief Operating Officer responded to questions asked. It was clarified that a Councillor would not be a director of a Linked Body, and therefore to avoid confusion, it was agreed that paragraphs 10.11 and

10.12 of the 'Code of Practice - Governance of Council involvement in linked bodies' found at Appendix 2 of the report be removed.

It was noted that relevant officers and Councillors would receive the necessary guidance, and that the list of Linked Bodies on the council website would be updated.

Members of the Committee welcomed the report and thanked the Chief Operating Officer for his work.

Resolved:

1. Endorsed the approach taken in the Governance of Linked Bodies paper and advice for Councillors/Officers.

8 **Introduction of Paperless Committee Meetings**

Laura Gittos, Head of Governance, presented the report: Introduction of Paperless Committee Meetings. The report provided an update on how Councillors accessed committee papers, the implications associated with receiving paper copies, and set out a proposed paperless approach.

The report was debated by Committee, and a number of key issues were raised. The Head of Governance responded to questions asked and it was noted that:

- Councillors with an accessibility issue (medical reasons/visual impairments/hidden disabilities) would be supported and provided with paper copies.
- Chairs and Vice Chairs would be provided with paper copies if required.
- A high standard of support would be provided to Councillors, and a support programme would be developed between now and the end of the municipal year to ensure Councillors were confident with the transition to paperless meetings.

Resolved:

1. Approved that Council adopted a "paperless" approach to meetings i.e. that Council approved the electronic delivery, by default, of all Council and Committee / Panel meeting papers with paper copies being provided only by exception (e.g. medical reasons/visual impairments/hidden disabilities, these requirements would be catered for.). Chairs and Vice Chairs could also opt to receive paper copies.
2. Approved that Councillors could use their Council issued devices and the functionality of Modern.Gov to access papers.
3. Approved that Councillors who received posted paper copies for Scrutiny meetings collect papers from their pigeonholes on the third floor.
4. Approved that papers were only posted to members of committees and panels who were external to the organisation – if requested, otherwise they would be shared electronically.
5. Approved that the Council have two hard copy agendas for viewing by the public at any such meeting.
6. Noted that officers continued to support Councillors in the understanding and operation of their devices and the Modern.Gov app.
7. Noted that officers would create online user guides and video tutorials in the new year for Councillors to access via the Councillor Portal to use Modern.Gov efficiently in readiness for the next municipal year.

9 **2023 Parliamentary Boundary Review Update**
Laura Gittos, Head of Governance, presented the report: 2023 Parliamentary Boundary Review Update. The report provided an update on the Parliamentary Constituencies Boundary Review and shared the Returning Officers draft response to the consultation.

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

The report was debated by Committee, and in response to concerns raised it was agreed that paragraph 5.1 of the report be amended to:

I understand that the review is based on the wards in place as of 1 December 2020, but to have one local government ward (St Peters) that is split across all three parliamentary constituencies creates significant administrative challenges for designating polling districts and polling stations in these areas.

Resolved:

1. Endorsed the Returning Officer response to the consultation subject to the above amendment.
2. Noted that the consultation closes on 5 December.