

Attendance

Members of the Governance and Ethics Committee

Cllr Rita Potter (Chair)
Cllr Jacqui Coogan (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Lovinyer Daley
Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Jonathan Crofts

Employees

David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Laura Gittos	Head of Governance
Alice Peacock	Deputy Electoral Services Manager
Jas Kaur	Democratic Services & Systems Manager
Donna Cope	Democratic Services Officer
Sarah Campbell	Customer Engagement Manager
Anna Zollino-Biscotti	Information Governance Manager

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1** **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Milkinder Jaspal and Councillor Rohit Mistry.
- 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 16 March 2023 be approved as a correct record.
- 4** **Matters arising**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, noted that at the request of the Chair, an additional meeting of the Governance and Ethics Committee would be arranged for early October. The additional meeting would replace the meeting cancelled in July and focus on changes to the Constitution.

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 **Update on the 2023 Annual Canvass**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the report: Update on the 2023 Annual Canvass. The report outlined the approach taken and set out the timescales for 2023.

Alice Peacock, Deputy Electoral Services Manager, outlined the report and noted the following updates since the papers had been published:

- Paragraph 2.4 - The revised register would now be published on 2 January 2024 due the upcoming by election in Bushbury South and Low Hill.
- Section 4 - All stages for route one had now been completed.
- Paragraph 2.3 - The telephone canvass had been extended until 15 September.
- Paragraph 2.3 - Door to door canvassers were now due to start canvassing from 19 September, which had been pushed back slightly due to the election. The canvassing for this ward would commence after the election.
- Section 5 - The current response rate for Route 2 was 35% (7991)
- Section 5 - There were 14294 properties left to receive a response from which the canvassers would be working on.
- Route 3 - All 76 care homes in Wolverhampton had been written to and to date 36% (28) had responded.

The report was considered by Committee.

Councillor Roberts moved the recommendation within the report. Councillor Russell seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

1. That the timetable for the 2023 annual canvass be noted.

6 **Evaluation of May 2023 Elections**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the report: Evaluation of May 2023 Elections. The report outlined the good practice and areas for improvement identified at the May elections; provided an update on the further legislation changes to be introduced under the Elections Act; and outlined the next statutory review of polling districts and polling places.

The Chief Operating Officer noted that the May 2023 Elections had been extremely challenging, but due to hard work and extensive planning, all had gone smoothly. It was further noted that the council had been nominated for a national award recognising their hard work and dedication on accessibility.

Laura Gittos, Head of Governance, outlined the report and highlighted key points. It was noted that the local election had been conducted well, and very positive feedback had been received on the implementation of the new Election Act

measures. The Head of Governance congratulated the Elections Team for receiving such excellent feedback and thanked Members of the Committee for their support.

The report was debated by Committee, and the Chief Operating Officer assured members that the promotion of Voter ID would continue, and ways to reduce the number of temporary polling stations were being explored.

The Head of Governance responded to questions asked, and it was agreed that further details regarding the rejected Voter Authority Certificate applications would be provided to members of the Committee.

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

Councillor Potter moved the recommendations within the report. Councillor Muston seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the timeline for the next changes to be implemented in the Elections Act be noted.
2. That the date for the next statutory review of polling districts and polling places be noted.
3. That it be noted that the final parliamentary boundary proposals must be reported to the House of Commons by 1 July 2023, and an update report would be brought to Governance and Ethics Committee with further detail.

7 **Boundary Commission for England Parliamentary Boundary Review Final Recommendations**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the report: Boundary Commission for England Parliamentary Boundary Review Final Recommendations. The report provided an update on the new parliamentary constituency boundaries and set out the plans and timetable for the statutory review of polling districts and polling places within Wolverhampton.

Alice Peacock, Deputy Electoral Services Manager, outlined the report and highlighted key points, noting that the final recommendations for the three Wolverhampton constituencies had not changed since the initial proposals.

The report was considered by Committee.

Councillor Potter moved the recommendations within the report. Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the plans and timetable for a statutory review of polling districts and polling places within Wolverhampton be approved.
2. That the outcome of the Boundary Commission for England Parliamentary Boundary Review Final Recommendations be noted.

8 **Conferring the Title of Honorary Alderman**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the report: Conferring the Title of Honorary Alderman. The report recommended that the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred upon former Councillors Philip Page and Jonathan Yardley.

Jaswinder Kaur, Democratic Services and Systems Manager, outlined the report and highlighted key points.

Councillor Potter moved the recommendation within the report. Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to:

1. Convene an extraordinary meeting on the 20 September 2023 to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillors Philip Page and Jonathan Yardley.

9 **2022-2023 Annual Complaints Report**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the 2022-2023 Annual Complaints Report. The report provided an overview of the complaints, including Local Government and Social Care/Housing Ombudsman enquiries, received during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

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 2022 to 31 March 2023 was provided along with the outcome of each case. Members were assured that all upheld complaints were investigated thoroughly, and examples of the lessons learnt were noted. An overview on officer complaint training was provided and an update on the policy and procedure review was outlined.

The Chief Operating Officer responded to questions asked and assured members that persistent complaints and budget requirements were monitored on a regular basis.

Councillor Potter moved the recommendations within report. Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the 2022 – 2023 Annual Complaints Report for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 be noted.

10 **Information Governance - Annual Report to SIRO 2022-2023**

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, introduced the report: Information Governance - Annual Report to SIRO 2022-2023. The report provided a summary of the work carried out by the Information Governance function for the period April 2022 to March 2023, as outlined in the Annual Report to SIRO.

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.

The report was considered by Committee and the importance of remaining vigilant against cyber-attacks was noted.

Councillor Potter moved the recommendation in the report. Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the Information Governance Annual Report to SIRO be noted.