

Governance and Ethics Committee

Minutes - 11 January 2024

Attendance

Members of the Governance and Ethics Committee

Cllr Rohit Mistry (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Paul Brookfield
Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Wendy Thompson

Employees

Sarah Campbell	Customer Engagement Manager
Amelia Higgs	Electoral Services Apprentice
Laura Gittos	Head of Governance
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services and Systems Manager
Laura Noonan	Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Alice Peacock	Deputy Electoral Services Manager
Jacob Stokes	Democratic Services Officer
Stuart Taylor	Information Governance Technical Specialist

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, Councillor Rita Potter, Councillor Milkinderpal Jaspal, Councillor Susan Roberts MBE, Councillor Lovinyer Daley and Councillor Jonathan Crofts.

Councillor Rohit Mistry chaired the meeting in Councillor Potter's absence.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting**
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.
- 4 Matters arising**
David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer, advised members that the Council had not heard back from the Government regarding the DBS certificates for Councillors, and that once a response was received, this would be circulated to the Committee.

5 **Preparations for May 2024 Combined Authority Mayoral and Local Elections**

The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report: Preparations for May 2024 Combined Authority Mayoral and Local Elections. The report outlined the preparations underway for the local elections and Combined Authority Mayoral elections taking place on Thursday 2 May 2024.

He advised members that the Council was prepared for any potential additional elections. He noted that an update in relation to parliamentary constituency changes would be brought to the March meeting of Governance and Ethics Committee.

Laura Noonan, Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager, outlined the report and highlighted key points.

The report was considered by Committee and the Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager responded to a question that was asked.

Councillor Rohit Mistry moved the recommendation within the report. Councillor Anwen Muston seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

1. That the preparations underway for the May 2024 elections be noted.

6 **Code of Conduct Member Complaints - Annual Report**

The Chief Operating Officer recommended that the Code of Conduct Member Complaints – Annual Report be deferred to the 8 February 2024 meeting of Governance and Ethics Committee.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Rohit Mistry. Councillor Anwen Muston seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

1. That the Code of Conducts Member Complaints – Annual Report be deferred to the 8 February 2024 meeting of Governance and Ethics Committee.

7 **Evaluation of Annual Canvass 2023**

The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report: Evaluation of Annual Canvass 2023. The report provided an evaluation of the 2023 annual canvass.

Alice Peacock, Deputy Electoral Services Manager, outlined the report and highlighted key points. She noted that the overall completion rate had increased from the 2022 annual canvass to 95% and a full ward breakdown of responses for all three routes could be found in the appendices attached to the report.

She advised members that the number of voters on the electoral register and postal voters as outlined in paragraph 3.5 of the report had increased slightly since the report's publication.

The report was considered by Committee. There were no questions asked.

Councillor Rohit Mistry moved the recommendation within the report. Councillor Anwen Muston seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

1. That the evaluation of the Annual Canvass 2023 be noted.

8 **Complaints Progress Update Quarter One and Two - 2023-2024**

The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report: Complaints Progress Update Quarter One and Two – 2023-2024. The report provided an overview of the complaints, including Local Government and Social Care/Ombudsman enquiries received from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

Sarah Campbell, Customer Engagement Manager, delivered a presentation. The presentation contained a six-monthly update on statutory complaint activity and other complaints under the Council's corporate complaints policy and procedure, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman enquiries, an update on the Joint Complaint Handling Code, complaint training, learning from complaints, and an update on complaints policies and procedures.

The report was considered by Committee and the Customer Engagement Manager responded to comments made.

The Chief Operating Officer advised members that information on the complaints procedure for residents would be provided in the weekly email sent to all Councillors.

Councillor Rohit Mistry moved the recommendations within the report. Councillor Zee Russell seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the Complaints Progress update for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023 be noted, including:
 - a. The Statutory Complaints Activity for Children's Services, Education Services, Adult Services and Public Health.
 - b. All the other complaints activity governed by the Corporate Complaints Policy.
2. That information on the complaints procedure for residents be shared with Councillors.

9 **Information Governance Progress Update - Quarter One and Two 2023-2024**

The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report: Information Governance Progress Update – Quarter One and Two 2023-2024. The report provided a progress update on the work carried out by the Information Governance function for the period April to December 2023.

Stuart Taylor, Information Governance Technical Specialist, delivered a presentation. The presentation contained a summary statement and performance update for the period April to December 2023, an update on identified risks and detail on the current Information Governance work plan.

He noted that the results of the outstanding information incident escalated to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) would be shared with members at the next meeting.

He noted that the ICO had returned a judgement on one case that was referred to them since the publication of the report, and that three out of five cases had now received a judgment of no further action.

The report was considered by Committee. There were no questions asked.

Councillor Rohit Mistry moved the recommendations within the report. Councillor Anwen Muston seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the Information Governance progress update report for the period April 2023 to December 2023 which provided a summary of the work carried out under the Information Governance function for the period be noted.
2. That the determination of the ICO regarding the outstanding information incident be circulated to members of the Governance and Ethics Committee, once received.