

Meeting GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Wednesday 1 May 2019 (commencing at 1.00 pm)

membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

COUNCILLORS

Bruce Laughton (Chairman)

Richard Butler
Steve Carr **A**
Kate Foale
John Handley
Errol Henry JP

John Longdon
Rachel Madden **A**
Liz Plant
Phil Rostance
Keith Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Caroline Agnew
Glen Bicknell
Heather Dickinson
Rob Disney
Keith Ford
Kaj Ghattora
Marjorie Toward
James Ward

Chief Executive's Department

OTHER ATTENDEES

John Gregory

Grant Thornton (External Auditors)

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 13 March 2019, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

The following temporary changes of membership for this meeting only were noted:-

- Councillor John Longdon had replaced Councillor Andy Sissons
- Councillor Liz Plant had replaced Councillor Nicki Brooks
- Councillor Richard Butler had replaced Councillor Mike Quigley MBE

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None

4. GOVERNANCE & ETHICS COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT

Rob Disney, Head of Internal Audit, introduced the report which outlined the work of the Committee since its establishment in June 2017.

RESOLVED: 2019/016

That the content of the report, to formally appraise Full Council of the achievements of the Committee to date and to set out the Committee's planned areas of work for the coming year, be agreed.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGSCO) DECISIONS FEBRUARY 2019 – MARCH 2019

Heather Dickinson, Group Manager for Legal and Democratic Services and Complaints introduced the report which detailed the LGSCO decisions received in this latest monitoring period.

Following discussions, Members queried, in light of the number of complaints that were not relevant to the LGSCO's remit, whether clearer guidance was needed for complainants in that respect. Heather agreed to speak with the Complaints Team about that issue and feedback to Members on that issue.

RESOLVED: 2019/017

That no actions were required in relation to the issues contained within the report.

6. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN 2019-20

Caroline Agnew, Data Protection Officer / Programme Manager, introduced the report which set out the proposed annual Action Plan.

RESOLVED: 2019/018

- 1) That the Information Governance Action Plan for 2019-20 be approved.
- 2) That the Committee receives quarterly updates on the delivery of the Action Plan.

7. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2018-19 – ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Glen Bicknell, Senior Accountant, introduced the report which provided an opportunity for the Committee to review the accounting policies used in creating the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2018-19.

RESOLVED: 2019/019

That the updated Accounting Policies be recommended to Policy Committee for approval.

8. INFORMING THE AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT – 2018-19 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

John Gregory, Director of Grant Thornton introduced the report which informed the Committee of the External Auditors' requirement for the provision of information regarding the Council's approach to dealing with fraud, litigation, laws and regulations as part of their audit of the 2018-19 accounts.

RESOLVED: 2019/020

That the information which had informed the audit risk assessment for the 2018-19 audit of the Statement of Accounts be noted, with no further actions required.

9. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS WAIVERS 2018-19

Kaj Ghattora, Group Manager, Procurement, introduced the report which informed the Committee about requests to waive the Council's Financial Regulations in the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.

RESOLVED: 2019/021

That the contents of the report and the continued progress in keeping waivers to a minimum be supported.

10. ASSURANCE MAPPING ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Rob Disney, Group Manager – Assurance, introduced the report which presented the outcomes of the assurance mapping pilot carried out in 2018-19 with a view to expanding this approach in 2019-20.

RESOLVED: 2019/022

- 1) That the assurance mapping process be retained in 2019-20.
- 2) That the scope of the assurance map for 2019-20 be widened to embrace two further aspects of governance (people management and asset management).
- 3) That progress against proposed actions to address the issues identified by the pilot be reported to this Committee as part of the update reports on the Annual Governance Statement.
- 4) That the positive assurance delivered in the three aspects of governance covered by the pilot exercise be welcomed, with no additional actions required.

11. LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Rob Disney, Group Manager – Assurance, introduced the report which reviewed the Local Code of Corporate Governance for the Council and sought approval for the proposed Annual Governance Statement 2018-19.

During discussions, officers agreed to clarify how Opposition Members can be kept up to date about any discussions which Chief Officers may be having with central government about the implications of Brexit for local government.

RESOLVED: 2019/023

- 1) That the updated Code of Corporate Governance be approved.
- 2) That the Annual Governance Statement 2018-19 be approved.
- 3) That updates on progress against the action plan be submitted to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

12. REVIEW OF OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chair of the Committee introduced the report on behalf of the cross party working group, detailing the group's findings and seeking support to submit these findings to Policy Committee for approval.

The Chair thanked Sarah Ashton and Keith Ford for their support to the working group with this review.

RESOLVED: 2019/024

That the following recommendations of the working group be endorsed for approval by Policy Committee:-

- a) That the approach to divide the various types of organisations within the Outside Bodies register to three categories be agreed, with Members' views welcomed on the initial categorisation of each of the bodies.
- b) That the various Planning Liaison Committees continue to be attended by the relevant Councillors and Planning officers and continue to be supported by the Planning team but that such committees be removed from the Outside Bodies list together with the outside bodies listed at paragraphs 18 and 19 and denoted in bold font in Appendix B and C.
- c) That the Safer Nottinghamshire Board and the Clayworth Educational Foundation be added to the register of outside bodies and the relevant formal appointments be made by the Ruling Group's Group Business Manager.
- d) That the proposed approach for sharing information about outside bodies with relevant committees be agreed, with Members' views welcomed on which are the most relevant committees for each body and that each committee be informed of the relevant outside bodies and their representatives which come within their remit, to enable information to be requested from the Council's representatives on specific bodies as and when required.
- e) That any concerns raised about a lack of attendance by Councillor representatives at meetings of any outside body in the register be raised with the Ruling Group's Group Business Manager and the Group Business Manager of the relevant Councillor as appropriate.

- f) That further clarification be sought as to whether the number of Councillor appointments can be reduced on the Lambs Charity and SACRE.
- g) That the proposed process for adding or removing outside bodies to the register, as detailed in paragraphs 28-31, be agreed and authority be delegated to the Team Manager, Democratic Services, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, to categorise any new outside bodies and to add Category B bodies to the register.
- h) That appointments to any outside bodies included in the register continue to be made by the Ruling Group's Group Business Manager, in consultation with the Group Business Manager of the relevant opposition group/s where appropriate.

13. COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS REPORT

Heather Dickinson, Group Manager for Legal and Democratic Services and Complaints introduced the report which outlined the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life following its consultation about ethical standards in local government and proposed a subsequent follow-up report to Committee if appropriate.

RESOLVED: 2019/025

- 1) That no further actions were required at this stage in connection with the contents of the report.
- 2) That a follow up report be submitted to this Committee if Government and/or the Local Government Association implement any of the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

14. UNDERSTANDING YOUR COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS – CIPFA WORKSHOP

The Chair of the Committee introduced the report which sought approval for two Members to attend this Workshop on 29 May 2019 in Leeds. The Chair underlined that one of the two places would be offered to the Main Opposition Group.

RESOLVED: 2019/026

That attendance at the CIPFA workshop on Understanding Your Council's Financial Reporting for two members be approved.

15. THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS – APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Heather Dickinson, Group Manager for Legal and Democratic Services and Complaints introduced the report which sought the Committee's endorsement for two candidates to the role of Independent Person.

RESOLVED: 2019/027

That the appointment of Ian Bayne and Craig Cole to the role of Independent Person be endorsed to Full Council for approval.

16. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: 2019/028

That the work programme be agreed.

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: 2019/029

That the public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the discussions were likely to involve disclosure of exempt information described in paragraph 3 of the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

18. THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS – APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS – EXEMPT APPENDIX

RESOLVED: 2019/030

That the contents of the updated Exempt Appendix be noted.

The meeting closed at 2.14 pm.

CHAIRMAN