

Meeting **GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Date **Thursday 14 March 2018 (commencing at 1.00pm)**

membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

COUNCILLORS

Bruce Laughton (Chairman)
Andy Sissons (Vice-Chairman)

Nicki Brooks
Steve Carr A
Kate Foale A
John Handley
Tony Harper

Errol Henry JP
Rachel Madden
Phil Rostance
Steve Vickers

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rob Fisher Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection

Jon Hawketts Children and Families
Laurence Jones

Derek Highton Place

Sue Bearman Glen Bicknell Lynn Brammer Heather Dickinson Rob Disney Keith Ford Jayne Francis-Ward Jo Kirkby Nigel Stevenson	}	Resources
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OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Tony Crawley – KPMG – External Auditor
Charles Daybell – Independent Person

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 1 February 2018, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Carr and Kate Foale.

The following temporary change of membership, for this meeting only, was reported:-

- Councillor Steve Vickers had replaced Councillor Mike Quigley.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None

4. THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Jayne Francis-Ward (Corporate Director, Resources) introduced the report which proposed a revised Code of Conduct and procedure for dealing with conduct allegations.

Following discussions about thresholds, the following limits were agreed:-

- that the threshold value for gifts and hospitality be increased from £25 to £50 to better reflect inflationary rises since this figure was initially set;
- then the maximum number of letters to be posted out by Councillors be set at 50, with any circulations exceeding that figure to be hand-delivered;
- that the limit for numbers of photocopies which Members can do on multi-function devices be set at 99 sides, with any jobs exceeding that limit referred to Central Print to ensure maximum cost effectiveness.

Charles Daybell, as one of the Council's appointed Independent Persons, queried the extent of 'censure' available to the Council in dealing with Conduct Allegations and it was clarified that this would be dependent upon the offence, although the limited range of sanctions were recognised. Mr Daybell also queried whether it would be more appropriate in the Points of Order regarding disorderly conduct to require, rather than request, a Councillor to leave a meeting. The legal sanctions available were clarified and it was underlined that in reality a meeting would likely be adjourned to enable any such behaviour to be addressed.

RESOLVED: 2018/006

- 1) That the documents and amendments described in paragraphs 4,5 and 6 of the report, including the threshold limits agreed by the Committee, be recommended to Full Council for approval.
- 2) That the Governance and Ethics Committee supports the establishment of a sub-committee in accordance with paragraph 7 of the report.
- 3) That, subject to approval by Full Council, the Committee's work programme be updated accordingly.

5. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, RISK REGISTER AND RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Rob Disney (Head of Internal Audit) introduced the report which sought Committee agreement to the Risk Management Strategy and to submit the Risk Management Policy to Policy Committee for approval.

RESOLVED: 2018/007

- 1) That the County Council's Corporate Risk Management Strategy be approved.
- 2) That Policy Committee approval be sought for the proposed Corporate Risk Management Policy.

6. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2017-18 – ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Glen Bicknell (Senior Accountant) introduced the report which sought the Committee's views on the proposed accounting policies for creating the Statement of Accounts 2017-18.

RESOLVED: 2018/008

That the revised Accounting Policies be submitted to Policy Committee for approval.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2018-19

Rob Disney (Head of Internal Audit) introduced the report which sought the Committee's views on the Internal Audit Plan for the coming financial year.

RESOLVED: 2018/009

That the planned coverage of Internal Audit's work in 2018-19 and the proposal for a revised approach to planning to be presented to Committee in July 2018 be endorsed.

8. PROCUREMENT OF EXTERNAL RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Laurence Jones (Interim Service Director, Commissioning and Resources) and Jon Hawketts (Group Manager) introduced the report which updated the Committee on the use of Financial Regulations waivers and the plans to mitigate off-contract spend in future.

RESOLVED: 2018/010

- 1) That no further actions other than those set out within the report were required to reduce the amount of off-contract spend that might otherwise be incurred in relation to specialist care and education placements for vulnerable children and young people.
- 2) That the report arising from the planned audit of external placements of looked after children and young people should include a specific update on

off-contract spend and be submitted to the Committee for consideration in Autumn 2018.

9. KPMG EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2017-18

Tony Crawley (External Auditor, KPMG) introduced the report which outlined the External Auditor's Audit Plan for their 2017-18 audit.

RESOLVED: 2018/011

That the External Auditor's Audit Plan for 2017-18 be noted.

10. CERTIFICATION OF GRANTS AND RETURNS 2016-17

Glen Bicknell (Senior Accountant) introduced the report which informed the Committee of the outcomes of the External Auditor's audits of the Teachers' Pension Return and the Local Transport Plan Major Projects S31 AUD Return.

RESOLVED: 2018/012

That the findings of the Teachers' Pension Return and the Local Transport Plan Major Projects Return audits and associated audit fees be noted.

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN DECISIONS – JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2018

Jo Kirkby (Team Manager, Complaints and Information Team) introduced the report which detailed the LGO complaint decisions received in January and February 2018.

RESOLVED: 2018/013

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

12. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK AND KEY POLICIES

Heather Dickinson introduced the report which sought the Committee's views on the proposed Information Governance framework and key policies and sought permission to submit these to Policy Committee for approval.

RESOLVED: 2018/014

That the Information Governance Framework, Information Rights Policy, Information Compliance Policy and Information Security Policy be recommended to Policy Committee for approval.

13. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Keith Ford (Team Manager, Democratic Services) introduced the report which updated the Committee on the existing training offer and sources of training available, sought Members' views on possible issues to cover in future sessions and requested Members' agreement to pilot the use of e-learning training packages to help assess their suitability for use by County Councillors overall.

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) e-learning package was demonstrated to Members and it was felt that this could be an appropriate means of undertaking training. Members underlined the need for further consideration of the 'timing-out' functionality of any such e-learning.

The Chairman underlined the importance of all Members being aware of the new GDPR requirements, with the possibility of making such training mandatory to be explored. The Chairman agreed to submit a report to Full Council about the implications of GDPR and the importance of all Councillors undertaking training about this.

RESOLVED: 2018/015

- 1) That the existing sources of training available be noted, with no further topics suggested at this stage.
- 2) That Members of the Committee agree to pilot the e-learning package about GDPR to assess the suitability of this type of training package for County Councillors overall.
- 3) That the Chairman of the Committee submit a report to Full Council about GDPR and implications for Councillors, including training needs.

14. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: 2018/016

That the work programme be agreed, subject to the addition of the following items:-

- Statement of Accounts – presentation – add to 13 June 2018
- Statement of Accounts – approval – add to 25 July 2018

The meeting closed at 2.34 pm.

CHAIRMAN