



Meeting GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Wednesday 5 February 2025 (commencing at 10.30am)

membership

## **COUNCILLORS**

Philip Owen (Chairman)  
Callum Bailey (Vice-Chairman)

Chris Barnfather	Sue Saddington - <b>Apologies</b>
Samantha Deakin - <b>Apologies</b>	Helen-Ann Smith - <b>Apologies</b>
Errol Henry JP - <b>Apologies</b>	Nigel Turner - <b>Apologies</b>
Andy Meakin - <b>Apologies</b>	Roger Upton
Michael Payne - <b>Apologies</b>	

## **SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Pauline Allan (substitute for Councillor Errol Henry)  
Councillor Jim Creamer (substitute for Councillor Michael Payne MP)  
Councillor Eric Kerry (substitute for Councillor Nigel Turner)  
Councillor John Lee (substitute for Councillor Sue Saddington)  
Councillor John Wilmott (substitute for Councillor Helen-Ann Smith)

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Richard Elston - Chief Executives  
Keith Ford  
Karen Hughman  
Simon Lacey  
Charlie Mason  
Gareth Moss  
Noel McMenamin  
Marjorie Toward

### **1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 November 2024, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Sam Deakin (other reasons)
- Councillor Errol Henry (other reasons)
- Councillor Andy Meakin (other reasons)
- Councillor Michael Payne MP (other reasons)
- Councillor Sue Saddington (medical/illness)
- Councillor Helen-Ann Smith (other reasons)

- Councillor Nigel Turner (medical/illness)

It was noted that this rescheduled meeting clashed with a Planning meeting taking place at Ashfield District Council.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

Councillor John Lee declared he had an Other Registerable Interest in item 8 – Newark and Sherwood Community Governance Review as his electoral division was directly affected by the proposals.

Having declared Other Registerable Interests, Councillor Lee left the meeting for consideration of Item 8 and did not return.

### **4. UPDATE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN DECISIONS (OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2024)**

The report set out information about Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decisions relating to the Council since the previous report to Committee. There was one investigation where fault was found out of a total of 5 investigations in the period October-November 2024. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of officers and seek assurance about actions put in place regarding the complaints.

During debate, it was explained that there had been a delay in informing the Council that a complainant's son could not attend school, leading to a loss of education. Refresher guidance would be provided to frontline special educational needs staff and their managers about the Council's duties for children who were not attending their school.

In response to a committee member's question, it was agreed that a written response be provided on the total financial remedy paid to Ombudsman complainants from the Children and Families budget in 2024-25.

#### **RESOLVED: 2025/01**

That the findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman be noted

### **5. COUNTER FRAUD PROGRESS REPORT**

The report provided an update on the counter-fraud activity undertaken to date in 2024-25, This covered work undertaken in relation to the National Fraud Initiative, recent counter-fraud activity and an update on actions taken against the Counter-fraud Action Plan.

During debate, it was explained that using Blue Badge statistics for London Boroughs was not an appropriate benchmark for Blue Badge management in Nottinghamshire. It was also explained that Blue Badge Days of Action were carried out at districts and borough level, and not by the County Council. While Artificial Intelligence (AI) was not used in developing counter-fraud learning, current learning did include guidance on how to spot AI-generated scams.

**RESOLVED 2025/02**

That the report be noted

**6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL MEMBERS**

**RESOLVED: 2025/03**

That Sir Rodney Brooke CBE DL, Madi Sharma, Stephen Bray and Charles Daybell be reappointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Nottinghamshire County Council for the period 2025-29.

**7. ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER – PROPOSED CHANGES TO STANDARDS AND AUDIT REGIME**

The report provided an update on the contents of the government's English Devolution White Paper in relation to the relevant areas of the Committee's Terms of reference such as the standards and audit regime.

While a range of views were expressed about the potential impact of the proposals during discussion, there was a general consensus that the current regime was not sufficiently robust in respect of sanctions.

**RESOLVED: 2025/04**

That the update be noted.

**8. NEWARK AND SHERWOOD COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Having previously declared an interest in this item, Councillor John Lee left the meeting and did not return.

**RESOLVED: 2025/05**

That:

- 1) The Chief Executive be authorised to submit the letter at Appendix A to the report as a courtesy response to the consultation on Newark and Sherwood District Council's draft proposals, reserving the County council's position for any formal response until phase 2 of the consultation;
- 2) Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to draft and submit the Council's response to the draft proposals, following consultation with members of the Committee. the Committee

## **9. WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED: 2025/06**

That the work programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.01am

CHAIRMAN