



Meeting GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Wednesday 22 March 2023 (commencing at 10.30am)

membership

COUNCILLORS

Philip Owen (Chairman)
Johno Lee (Vice-Chairman)

Richard Butler	Helen-Ann Smith
Errol Henry JP - apologies	Nigel Turner
Andy Meakin - apologies	Roger Upton - apologies
Michael Payne	Daniel Williamson
Sue Saddington - apologies	

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Chris Barnfather for Councillor Mrs Sue Saddington
Councillor Jim Creamer for Councillor Errol Henry
Councillor Tracey Taylor for Councillor Roger Upton

INDEPENDENT PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE

Ian Bayne
Craig Cole
Rob White

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Sue Batty	- Adult Social Care & Public Health
Glen Bicknell	- Chief Executives
Heather Dickenson	
Catherine Haywood	
Simon Lacey	
Kate Morris	
Keith Palframan	
Marjorie Toward	
Nigel Stevenson	
Jill Norman	- Children and Families

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Andrew Smith - External Auditor, Grant Thornton.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 22 February 2023, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Errol Henry (Other Reasons)
- Councillor Andy Meakin (Other County Council Business)
- Councillor Mrs Sue Saddington (Medical / Illness)
- Councillor Roger Upton (Other Reasons)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

4. UPDATE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN DECISIONS (JANUARY 2023 TO FEBRUARY 2023)

The report set out information about two complaints against the Council where fault was found by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of officers and seek assurance about actions put in place from the relevant departments regarding those complaints.

Jill Norman, Group Manager for Integrated Children's Disability Service and Sue Batty, Service Director for Community Services and Aging Well answered members questions on the complaints where fault had been found.

During discussion members requested a further report in the future providing an update on performance around the timely annual review of the Education, Health and Care Plans.

RESOLVED: 2023/11

- (1) That members note the findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and welcome the lessons learned and actions taken in response to the findings
- (2) That a further report on the Annual reviews of Education, Health and Care Plans be brought to this committee in 6 months' time to consider how improvements made have impacted performance against national targets.

5. UPDATE ON COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN FINDINGS

The report provided an update to the Committee on improvements made in Adult Social Care Financial Services in response to the corporate review of complaints and the subsequent departmental review undertaken with the Service to address concerns raised in the September 2022 meeting of this Committee.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of officers and agreed that the work undertaken and the changes being implemented were positive. They thanked officers for their work on implementing the changes described in the report.

RESOLVED: 2023/12

- 1) That members note the improvements delivered in response to the findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the actions planned in response to the findings.
- 2) That the Committee receive a further report in 12 months' time to review the impact of the measures introduced as a result of the review.

6. ANNUAL AUDIT FINDINGS 2021 - 22

The report set out the findings of the Annual Audit 2021-22. Nigel Stevenson, Service Director for Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement and Section 151 Officer, and Andrew Smith, External Auditor from Grant Thornton answered members technical questions.

Members sought assurance around a number of issues including previously identified actions required and the Medium Term Financial plan.

RESOLVED: 2023/13

That the Committee notes the external auditors' Audit Findings Report 2021/22

7. INTERNAL AUDIT TERM 2 PROGRESS REPORT & TERM 1 PLAN 23-24 REPORT

RESOLVED: 2023/14

That the Committee notes the outcome of the Internal Audit work carried out in Term 2 – 2022/23 and the planned coverage of Internal Audit's work in Term 1 of 2023/24 be progressed to help deliver assurance to the Committee in priority areas.

8. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The report provided an update on the progress being made on the Governance Action Plan for 2022/23 detailing work undertaken across a number of issues.

Members sought assurance that where proposed changes to the constitution impacted external bodies on which County Council Members sat, that the external body would be consulted. The Chairman confirmed that the cross party working group that considered changes to the constitution included members from all parties, as well as officers, and that feedback from the working group would highlight any suggested changes.

RESOLVED: 2023/15

That Members note the actions taken to update the governance issues raised in this report.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS REPORT

The report updated the Committee on the work carried out by the Members Working Group to produce a new Code of Conduct for Members. The Independent persons thanked Members and Officers for taking into account their input throughout the process and encouraged all members to participate in the upcoming training events.

Members thanked the Independent Persons for their input throughout the process, and thanked officers for their support and hard work on drafting the revised Nottinghamshire Code.

RESOLVED: 2023/16

- 1) That Committee recommends to Council the adoption of the revised draft Nottinghamshire Code attached to the published report at Appendix 1
- 2) That appropriate mandatory training be arranged for members, to be completed as soon as practicable.
- 3) That members review their declarations of interests following notification by Democratic Services.
- 4) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to develop, amend and implement guidance and procedures as may be necessary to sit alongside the revised Nottinghamshire Code, in consultation with the Chairman of Governance Committee where appropriate

10. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: 2023/17

That the work programme be agreed.

The meeting closed at 11:16am.

CHAIRMAN