

Public Document Pack

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12 June 2020

Governance Committee

A virtual meeting of the Committee will be held at **2.15 pm** on **Monday, 22 June 2020**.

Note: In accordance with regulations in response to the current public health emergency, this meeting will be held virtually with members in remote attendance. Public access is via webcasting.

The meeting will be available to watch live via the Internet at this address:

<http://www.westsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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Agenda

1. **Declarations of Interest**

Members and officers must declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any business on the agenda. They should also make declarations at any stage such as an interest becomes apparent during the meeting. Consideration should be given to leaving the meeting if the nature of the interest warrants it. If in doubt please contact Democratic Services before the meeting.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee** (Pages 5 - 10)

The Committee is asked to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2020 (cream paper).

3. **Urgent Matters**

Items not on the agenda which the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances.

4. **Plans for Member Meetings during the Covid-19 Emergency** (Pages 11 - 24)

Report by the Director of Law and Assurance.

The Committee is asked to consider proposals for the July County Council meeting as well as for meetings to the end of this calendar year. Any proposals agreed by the Committee will be subject to review in line with any new guidance relating to the Covid-19 public health emergency.

5. **Senior Officer Settlements** (Pages 25 - 28)

Report by the Interim Director of Human Resources and Organisation Change and the Director of Law and Assurance.

Further to the discussion at the meeting of the Committee on 20 January 2020, to consider a report on the arrangements for decisions on severance payments for senior officers.

6. **Unison Recognition** (Pages 29 - 34)

Report by the Interim Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change.

Following the deferral of this report at the last meeting, the Committee is asked to consider a revised report on a proposal for a voluntary agreement to provide greater clarity on the relationship with Unison as representative body for staff.

7. **Notice of Motion on Abuse of Members and Staff** (Pages 35 - 46)

Report by the Director of Law and Assurance and the Interim Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change.

A motion on the abuse of members and staff to the County Council in December 2019 was referred to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources for consideration. The Cabinet Member is broadly supportive of the motion and, as a result, the Committee is asked to approve revisions to the policy on dealing with malicious communications.

8. **Member Development Working Group: Phase 2 - Role of Councillor and updates on Phase 1 - Removing barriers to stand for election** (Pages 47 - 66)

Report by the Director of Law and Assurance.

The Committee is asked to consider the recommendations of the Member Development Working Group which has completed phase 2 of its work in preparation for the County Council elections in 2021.

9. **Proposed Member Development Strategy** (Pages 67 - 78)

Report by the Chairman of the Member Development Group.

To consider the draft Member Development Strategy as part of the work towards applying for the South East Employers' 'Charter for Elected Member Development'.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 10.30 a.m. on Monday, 6 July 2020.

To all members of the Governance Committee

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Governance Committee

20 May 2020 – At a virtual meeting of the Governance Committee held at 10.30 am.

Present: Cllr Duncton (Chairman)

Cllr Patel, Cllr Bradbury, Cllr M Jones, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr Lanzer, Cllr Marshall, Cllr Mitchell and Cllr Walsh

Part I

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Cllr Lanzer and Cllr M Jones declared personal interests as members of Crawley Borough Council in relation to the report on plans for member meetings during the Covid-19 emergency, specifically, due to of the economic impacts on Gatwick Airport and Crawley businesses and residents affected by the downturn in the aviation industry.

2. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

2.1 Commenting on minute 40.8 regarding the proposed merger of Planning Committee and Rights of Way Committee the Director of Law and Assurance advised that the proposal will now be considered by Governance Committee in autumn 2020 because the matter is no longer urgent following a slight easing of pressures on the Democratic Services budget.

2.2 Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Plans for Member Meetings during the Covid-19 Emergency

3.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes) on plans for meetings during the current public health emergency, the new Standing Orders on Virtual Meetings and proposals for meetings to the end of July 2020.

3.2 The Director of Law and Assurance introduced the report, highlighting the reasons for the proposals, and welcoming comments from the Committee about the new Standing Orders, the proposals including options for managing the list of pending notices of motion for Council

3.3 The Committee agreed it would be sensible to cancel the June and July County Local Committee (CLC) meetings. It was also agreed to engage members informally regarding decisions, to be carried out through urgent action procedures, on Traffic Regulation Orders and Community Initiative Funding, the latter of which should be focused towards organisations providing sustainable support to communities and filling in identified gaps in the Covid-19 emergency response.

3.4 The Committee discussed a concern raised by Cllr Walsh about the Council's lack of video technology for meetings. Cllr Lanzer advised that the Council is exploring the feasibility of videoconferencing options but it will take time to ensure the system is robust, secure and compatible with current IT systems, and can be satisfactorily accessed by home-workers. Video conferencing uses a significant proportion of network capacity, and this must not interfere with the needs of operational activities. However, the Committee noted that it is hoped to use Skype video from June.

3.5 The Committee discussed proposals for future full Council meetings and agreed that the next scheduled meeting on 17 July should go ahead. Time should be allowed for debate on the Council's handling and response to the Covid-19 emergency, including lessons learned.

3.6 The Committee also discussed a request by Cllr Walsh and Cllr M Jones for an additional full Council in June 2020 to demonstrate democratic accountability and to provide opportunity for an early debate on the Council's response to the public health crisis and its impact on the area.

3.7 Cllr Walsh and Cllr M Jones also raised concerns about the three minutes allocated for Scrutiny Chairmen and leaders of the minority groups to speak at the monthly Cabinet meeting as being insufficient to address such complex issues. The Committee noted that Cabinet meetings are a decision-making forum and all recent formal decisions were debated at the relevant scrutiny committees.

3.8 The Committee acknowledged the additional capacity required from staff to manage virtual meetings and also thanked staff who have been redeployment across the Council to respond to the Covid-19 emergency.

3.9 The Committee agreed with proposals to suspend the current member development programme, but noted that there are plans for an event about the budget and capital programme planning.

3.10 Cllr Walsh, seconded by Cllr M Jones, proposed that a meeting of County Council be held in June 2020 for the specific purposes of considering the Council's response to the Covid-19 emergency and to allow members to ask questions on that topic. The proposal was lost.

3.11 Cllr M Jones, seconded by Cllr Walsh, proposed that the following amendment to Part 4, Section 1A of the Constitution – Standing Orders – Virtual Meetings:

'For the duration of these Standing Orders, the provision in Paragraph 10 of Appendix 1 of the Scheme of delegation which permits the leaders of each of the large and medium minority groups of the Council to attend any meeting of the Cabinet and speak for up to three minutes on any item on the agenda, shall be replaced with the following provision:

The leaders of each of the large and medium minority groups shall be invited to attend any meeting of the Cabinet and speak on the agenda item relating to the national emergency for up to five minutes, to have the right to ask supplementary questions and to put propositions to the Cabinet for them to debate and vote on.'

The proposal was lost.

3.12 Resolved –

- (1) That the new Standing Orders on Virtual Meetings, as set out at Appendix A, be noted;
- (2) That changes to member meetings to the end of July 2020 be made including:
 - (a) Non-urgent or non-time critical matters to be postponed or dealt with informally.
 - (b) Member development sessions be paused with the exception of an event on the Council's budget and capital programme planning, expected to take place in July 2020.
 - (c) Cabinet meetings to continue to be held monthly for collective decision making and that Scrutiny Chairman and leaders of the main minority groups continue to be invited to attend and speak at these meetings.
 - (d) Scrutiny Committees continue as scheduled to focus on key decision preview and the monitoring of important service improvement programmes. Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee to be provided with updates on the impacts of Covid-19 through the Total Performance Monitor.
 - (e) All County Local Committee meetings due to be held in June and July to be cancelled. Members to be informally consulted about Traffic Regulation Orders and Community Initiative Funding, which will be determined via urgent action procedures.
 - (f) That the next County Council meeting of 17 July 2020 take place and that arrangements be agreed at the meeting of Governance Committee on 22 June 2020.
- (3) That plans for member meetings be reviewed at the next Governance Committee meeting of 22 June 2020, including looking ahead to autumn 2020.

4. Unison Recognition

4.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change (copy appended to the signed minutes) on a proposal for a voluntary agreement to provide greater clarity on the relationship with Unison as a representative body for staff.

4.2 The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change introduced the report, advising the proposal as key to good working relations with unions and staff and to pay negotiations and organisational change. It would help rebuild the Council's relationship with Unison and send a positive message to staff.

4.3 The Committee discussed the proposal, noting the context. Suggesting a need for more time concerns were raised about:

- the need for detail about the staff affected and Unison membership;
- the implications of a 'voluntary' agreement.
- The reasons for a move away from the current informal arrangements, and a fuller rationale for the proposal.

4.4 The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change clarified that:

- the proposed agreement is symbolic rather than significant;
- Unison membership has increased recently;
- either party may withdraw from the agreement at any time;
- that the proposal would strengthen the bond with local Unison members and would demonstrate commitment from the Council to its staff.

4.5 Cllr Walsh and Cllr M Jones stated that to delay the proposal would send the wrong message to both staff and to Unison.

4.6 Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Marshall, proposed a decision on this report be deferred so that additional information can be brought to Governance Committee for consideration on 22 June 2020. The proposal was agreed.

4.7 Resolved – That the decision on the proposal to enter into and maintain a recognition agreement with Unison to include recognition rights for employees on HAY; and Public Health/Agenda for Change grades be deferred until the Committee received a further report providing additional information.

5. Minor Changes to the Constitution

5.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes) on a number of minor changes to the Constitution.

5.2 The Committee supported the proposed changes as necessary.

5.3 Resolved –

- (1) That the County Council be recommended to approve the changes to Part 3 of the Constitution as set out in the report.

- (2) That County Council be recommended to approve the change of name of the Pension Panel to 'Pensions Committee'.

6. West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference

6.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes) on a proposal by the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on 30 January for changes to its constitution.

6.2 The Committee supported the proposed changes as necessary.

6.3 Resolved – That the revised terms of reference for the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, as set out in Appendix A of the report, be recommended to the County Council for inclusion in the County Council's Constitution.

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1 The Committee noted that the next meeting will be held at 2.15 p.m. on Monday, 22 June 2020. In accordance with regulations in response to the current public health emergency, the meeting will be held virtually with members in remote only attendance.

The meeting ended at 12.25 pm

Chairman

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Governance Committee
22 June 2020 Part I
Plans for Member Meetings during the Covid-19 Emergency
Report by the Director of Law and Assurance

Summary

At its last meeting this Committee agreed to review plans for member meetings, looking ahead to autumn 2020, as well as to consider the format for and business of the County Council meeting due to be held on 17 July 2020. This report outlines proposals for the July County Council meeting as well as for meetings to the end of this calendar year. Any proposals agreed by the Committee will be subject to review in line with any new guidance relating to the Covid-19 public health emergency.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree the plans for the County Council meeting on 17 July 2020 (as set out at paragraph 2);
- (2) Agree the amendments to Standing Orders for Virtual Meetings (as set out in Appendix A);
- (3) Review the list of member meetings to the end of December 2020 (as set out at Appendix B) and agree principles for holding these meetings;
- (4) Consider any consultation required on proposals for future member meetings (as set out at paragraph 4), to be reported back to the Committee; and
- (5) Agree that plans for member meetings should be reviewed at each meeting of this Committee until further notice.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 At the meeting of this Committee on 20 May 2020 plans for member meetings during the Covid-19 Emergency to the end of July 2020 were agreed, as set out below:

- Non-urgent or non-time critical matters to be postponed or dealt with informally

- Cabinet meetings to continue to be held monthly for collective decision-making.
 - Scrutiny Committees to continue as scheduled to focus on key decision preview and the monitoring of important service improvement programmes.
 - All County Local Committee meetings due to be held in June and July to be cancelled.
 - Full Council on 17 July 2020 to go ahead, with arrangements for this to be agreed by this Committee in June.
- 1.2 A list of meetings to the end of July 2020 was agreed and the Council's calendar of meetings has been updated accordingly. The Committee agreed that future meeting plans should be reviewed in June, including looking ahead to autumn 2020.
- 1.3 Up to the start of June all formal meetings were held virtually via audio Skype, with public able to listen via the audio-webcast. From June meetings are being video-webcast (still using Skype) as network capacity issues have been addressed. The Council is evaluating the feasibility of other video conferencing solutions and this Committee will be updated on progress.
- 1.4 There are no plans at this stage to return to meetings being held 'in person' at venues such as County Hall. Any return to meetings being held physically will require a full risk assessment, with the health, safety and wellbeing of councillors and staff being the paramount consideration. It may be possible in the future to hold 'hybrid' meetings, with some councillors and staff present in person and others joining virtually. However, the current legal position is that councils may not gather together in person to hold meetings. This will be kept under review and any changes reported to this Committee.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Following discussions involving the Chairman, the Leader and minority Group Leaders plans for the agenda and the procedural arrangements for the County Council meeting on 17 July have been prepared for consideration by the Committee.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the agenda comprises:
- A report on the Council's response to the Covid-19 public health emergency including service impact by cabinet portfolio, with a set time for questions.
 - A report on the Council's plans for re-setting service and corporate priorities and outcomes in light of the impact of the Covid-19 public health emergency on services and resources, with a set time for speeches and questions.
 - A report on the Improvement Plan for Children's Services in accordance with usual rules for cabinet member address.
 - A report on the Improvement Plan for the Fire and Rescue Service in accordance with the usual rules for cabinet member address.

- The Scrutiny annual report and work programme.
 - Governance Committee matters for approval (if needed).
- 2.3 It is proposed that the meeting on 17 July be limited in time to half a day, but scheduled to begin at 10.00 a.m. and to finish at 1.15 p.m. This is one and a half hours shorter than the usual Council meeting. It will take place virtually using audio and video conferencing facilities, with members able to choose whether to use the video link or to limit contact to audio. It is also proposed that changes are made to Standing Orders in order to better manage the reduced time and to ensure that as many members who wish to speak may do so. A set of revised Standing Orders is attached for approval by the Committee at **Appendix A**. It is proposed that, if approved, the Standing Orders be formally adopted by urgent action in advance of the July meeting.
- 2.4 It is also proposed that all members have the opportunity to present a written question (limited in length) for reply in advance of the meeting so as to reduce the pressure on the time allocated to business at the meeting, where information requested can easily be provided.
- 2.5 Several changes were proposed at a recent meeting of the Chairman with group leaders, including a proposal to extend the time of Council to a whole day (10.30 to 4.15). The suggested changes are:
- that each of the item timings should be extended (the main items and also the Cabinet Member addresses) to provide for a longer period for questions.
 - that there should be a Cabinet general question time of up to 45 minutes.
 - that new notices of motion should be allowed.
 - that the gap from July to October is too long between meetings and that an extra Council meeting should be scheduled for August or September or the October meeting brought forward.
- 2.6 In relation to outstanding notices of motion previously moved for debate by the County Council it is proposed that the following arrangements be agreed by the Committee:
- That the members moving and seconding each of the motions be invited to confirm by the end of June whether they wish to withdraw the motion in light of the response from the relevant Cabinet Member.
 - That, in the event of any motion being requested to be debated, arrangements be made for those to be debated at the next meeting of the County Council after 17 July, currently 16 October 2020.
 - That the time for debate on any motion be limited to 45 minutes, with all individual member speeches limited to five minutes.
- 2.7 A list of member meetings to the end of December 2020 is attached at **Appendix B**. This includes meetings already reviewed by the Committee to the end of July. The Committee is asked to endorse the proposed approach

to meetings it sets out, pending any further Government/Public Health guidance that may impact on future arrangements.

- 2.8 At its last meeting, the Committee agreed that business should be kept to essential business in order to manage capacity during the public health emergency. Some scrutiny Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) are due to meet during June and July, but the details of these are not included in Appendix B as the timing has not been confirmed. It will be important to minimise such TFG work, both in terms of their overall number and the number of times any TFG meets and it is proposed that the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee could play an informal role in monitoring this. The principle is that the TFGs should not duplicate any scrutiny committee work and that they should be established only for matters the main committee cannot otherwise address.
- 2.9 The current assumption is that all member meetings will be held virtually, and webcast live, enabling the public to watch the meeting. It is proposed that this Committee will review member meeting plans at each meeting and that at its September meeting it should consider whether County Local Committee meetings should be resumed. Any changes proposed to the agreed list of meetings, including additional meetings or cancellations, will be reported to the Committee so that it can continue to monitor capacity and ensure appropriate democratic accountability.

3. Resources

- 3.1 There are no significant resource implications relating to the proposals contained in this report. Council staff, both within Democratic Services and across the organisation, have been involved in supporting the corporate response to Covid-19. This is ongoing and there is therefore some reduction in capacity to support member meetings. Virtual meetings require more support from Democratic Services staff, so there are increased resource implications for such meetings. It will be important to monitor the frequency of meetings and to continue to minimise business where appropriate.

Factors taken into account

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The Chairman and Group Leaders have been consulted on the proposed arrangements for the July County Council meeting. The Committee is asked to consider any wider consultation required relating to future meeting plans. Consultees may include county councillors, committee chairmen, Executive Directors and Directors and other partners (e.g. NHS organisations that have seats on the Health and Wellbeing Board; co-optee members; Arun District Council on plans for the Joint Arun Area Committees).
- 4.2 This report was shared on publication with all county councillors inviting comment via the Chairman.

5. Risk Implications and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Lack of democratic debate on issues	Plans will be led by members following consultation within groups
Insufficient capacity to support meetings	Decisions will be informed by advice on resources and impact on critical services

6. Other Options Considered

6.1 Options will be considered within the Committee's debate.

7. Equality Duty

7.1 There is no equality duty impact arising from this report. The needs of individuals who may wish to participate in member meetings will need to be considered in planning the technology and methods of communication for all council business.

8. Social Value, Crime and Disorder Act and Human Rights Implications

8.1 None

Tony Kershaw

Director of Law and Assurance

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Appendix

Appendix A – Standing Orders on Virtual Meetings

Appendix B - List of Member Meetings to December 2020

Background Papers

None

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Proposed addition to Part 4, Section 1a of the Constitution

Standing Orders – Virtual Meetings

Provision for County Council meeting 17 July 2020

- 11.22 The report on the response to the Covid-19 public health emergency under Standing Order 2.23(h) will have an introduction by the Leader of up to 10 minutes, followed by up to two questions per member (the second being a supplementary) for up to 45 minutes in total. Answers may be provided by Cabinet Members or officers. Questions should be brief and not preceded by speeches. A Cabinet Member may choose to invite an officer from the Executive Leadership Team to answer a question put to that Cabinet Member. One written question per member of up to 50 words on this topic can be submitted by 12 noon on Friday, 10 July and written answers to these will be published at 12 noon on Thursday, 16 July.
- 11.23 The report on Council plans and a framework for the future of the Council following the Covid-19 public health emergency under Standing Order 2.23(h) will have an introduction by the Leader of up to 10 minutes, followed by a debate of up to 45 minutes with each speaker limited to three minutes. Members may include questions to be answered by the Leader or the Chief Executive at the end of the debate. One written question per member of up to 50 words on this topic can be submitted by 12 noon on Friday, 10 July and written answers to these will be published at 12 noon on Thursday, 16 July.
- 11.24 The Cabinet Member addresses on Children's Improvement Plan and the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Plan will be in line with Standing Orders 2.32 to 2.34.
- 11.25 The debate on the Scrutiny Annual Report and Work Programme will be subject a time limit of three minutes per member.
- 11.26 Standing Orders 2.24, 2.29(a), 2.35 to 2.55 and 2.61 to 2.65 are waived for this meeting, so there will be no Cabinet Member Question Time, Written Questions or Notices of Motion.

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Plans for Formal Member Meetings to end December 2020

Meeting	Date	Proposals
June 2020		
Rights of Way Committee	23/06/20	Cancelled
Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee	24/06/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview
Health and Wellbeing Board	25/06/20	Cancelled
Corporate Parenting Panel	25/06/20	Virtual informal meeting (not webcast)
Police and Crime Panel	26/06/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
July 2020		
Staff Board of Appeal	06/07/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast. Meeting will be cancelled if no business.
Governance Committee	06/07/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Planning Committee	07/07/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting if required (will be cancelled if no urgent business)
Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee	09/07/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on decision preview
County Council	17/07/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting, business to be confirmed by Governance Committee on 22/06/20
Cabinet	21/07/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Pensions Committee	22/07/20	To be confirmed, depending on whether any time critical/urgent business is required
Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee	23/07/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business
Staff Board of Appeal	24/07/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast.
August 2020		
Staff Board of Appeal	13/08/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast. Meeting will be cancelled if no business.

Meeting	Date	Proposals
September 2020		
Pensions Advisory Board	07/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – any confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast
Governance Committee	07/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – to include review of member meeting plans
Corporate Parenting Panel	08/09/20	Virtual informal meeting (not webcast)
Planning Committee	08/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting if required (will be cancelled if no urgent business)
Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee	09/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview
Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee	10/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview
Staff Board of Appeal	14/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast. Meeting will be cancelled if no business.
Cabinet	15/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee	24/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview and the service improvement programme
Police and Crime Panel	25/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee	30/09/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview and the service improvement programme
October 2020		
Staff Board of Appeal	08/10/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast. Meeting will be cancelled if no business.
Health and Wellbeing Board	08/10/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Treasury Management Panel	09/10/20	Virtual informal meeting (not webcast)
County Council	16/10/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting

Meeting	Date	Proposals
Planning Committee	19/10/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting if required (will be cancelled if no urgent business)
Central and South Mid Sussex County Local Committee (CLC)	19/10/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
South Chichester County Local Committee	19/10/10	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
Cabinet	20/10/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee	21/10/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview
Pensions Committee	23/10/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – any confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast.
November 2020		
Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee	02/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Standards Committee	02/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Rights of Way Committee	03/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting if required (will be cancelled if no urgent business)
Adur County Local Committee	04/11/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
Crawley County Local Committee	04/11/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee	05/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview and the service improvement programme
North Chichester County Local Committee	09/11/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
Worthing County Local Committee	09/11/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
Cabinet	10/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting

Meeting	Date	Proposals
Planning Committee	10/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting if required (will be cancelled if no urgent business)
Joint Western Arun Area Committee	10/11/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
North Mid Sussex County Local Committee	10/11/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee	11/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview and any NHS service change proposals
Staff Board of Appeal	12/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast. Meeting will be cancelled if no business.
North Horsham County Local Committee	12/11/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education	16/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Corporate Parenting Panel	18/11/20	Informal virtual meeting (not webcast)
Chanctonbury County Local Committee	18/11/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee	18/11/20	Governance Committee in September to consider whether to resume CLC meetings
Pensions Advisory Board	20/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – any confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast.
Governance Committee	23/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Cabinet	24/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee	25/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview
Treasury Management Panel	25/11/20	Informal virtual meeting (not webcast)
Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee	27/11/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key

Meeting	Date	Proposals
		decision preview and the service improvement programme
December 2020		
Planning Committee	01/12/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting if required (will be cancelled if no urgent business)
Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee	03/12/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting with reduced business, focusing on key decision preview
Staff Board of Appeal	03/12/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting – confidential (Part II) business will not be webcast. Meeting will be cancelled if no business.
County Council	11/12/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting
Cabinet	15/12/20	Virtual (webcast) meeting

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Governance Committee
22 June 2020 Part I
Senior Officer Settlements
Report by Interim Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change and Director of Law and Assurance

Summary

At its meeting on 20 January 2020 the Committee agreed changes to the Pay Policy Statement but asked for a report to be prepared for a future meeting of the Committee to give detail on the arrangements for decisions on severance payments for senior officers.

Recommendation

That members consider the issues raised in the report and the options presented and advise whether any change should be made to the policy.

1. Background and Context

- 1.1. The Localism Act 2011 requires each local authority to produce a Pay Policy Statement (the 'statement') explaining the authority's policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, including the pay ratio between higher and lower paid officers. The statement also describes the policy on severance for chief officers. Government guidance issued at the time such statements were introduced suggested that large severance payments to senior officers should be determined at a meeting of the Council. The threshold indicated for such an arrangement was £100,000.
- 1.2. Paragraph 10.1 of the current Pay Policy states that

The County Council has determined that a vote by the Council on severance payments above a defined threshold is not required. This is due to the fact that the Governance Committee determines all pay policies including those affecting severance payments.
- 1.3. Current severance arrangements and payments are determined by officers through the application of the County Council's HR and employment policies. Decisions on severance payments for chief officers would normally be made by the Chief Executive or relevant Executive Director by reference to the terms of the contract of employment. Where a severance payment is arrived at in the settlement of a claim or dispute under the contract of employment the Director of Law and Assurance has authority to settle these, agreeing terms in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance.
- 1.4. The County Council has made a number of payments on the termination of employment contracts with senior officers over recent years. In those cases

where a decision to bring the employment to an end is part of an employment dispute the areas of dispute are settled by reference to the terms of the employment contract and an assessment of the merits and value of any claims and the benefits of contract termination.

- 1.5. By their nature it would be difficult for such claims to be the subject of debate at a meeting of the Council, not least because members may well be involved in dealing with grievance or disciplinary proceedings associated with the matter. It would also not provide a reasonable forum for debating individual contract terms as these would be confidential and contractual.
- 1.6. There are other factors which would make such referral for debate and decision by full Council problematic. Time is often of the essence in reaching an agreement for the termination of employment and a referral for a member meeting would introduce delay. At senior level especially severance arrangements usually require sensitive, often legal, negotiations which would be impractical if the final decision was subject to political considerations at a meeting of the County Council.
- 1.7. A review of practice in neighbouring councils of similar size indicates that no arrangements are in place for such severance decisions to be considered by or decided by full Council. In one county council those settlements above a certain threshold are taken to an equivalent of the Governance Committee, but with the detail of the settlement terms handled separately.
- 1.8. The Governance Committee does have responsibility for HR policy and staff terms and conditions. It also oversees the work of the Appeals Panel – which has responsibility for staff discipline and grievance appeals – and for all such proceedings for the most senior officers. It may therefore be reasonable to look at formalising the engagement of members in those cases more likely to lead to a financial or reputational impact upon the Council.

2. Options

- 2.1. It is proposed that, in line with current arrangements, all severance agreements above a certain threshold (£10,000) are determined by officers in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance. The current scheme of delegation provides for this. If the Committee is minded not to move to a situation where severance payments above a specified threshold must be subject to approval by full Council, there are other options for ensuring member involvement in decisions which may be controversial or involve more significant payments.
- 2.2. Option A: In cases where the officer subject to a proposal for severance is a member of the Corporate Leadership Team and where the value of any severance is expected to exceed £100,000 it is suggested that the matter is considered (excluding any officer subject of the severance) by the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer and that the proposal is then presented to a panel of three to five members of the Governance Committee, to include the Chairman and at least one member who is not a member of the Cabinet.
- 2.3. Option B: Using the same criteria as option 1 that the proposal is referred for consultation by the Chairman, two members of the Cabinet and the chairman

of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee before any decision is taken by the officers with delegated authority to settle the matter.

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Background Papers

None

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Governance Committee
22 June 2020 Part I
Unison Recognition
Report by Interim Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change

Summary

Unison has requested recognition for negotiating the annual pay review for employees on SMG4, HAY; and Public Health/Agenda for Change grades. Under current arrangements this is a local decision of the Chief Executive.

The Governance Committee considered this matter at the meeting on 20 May and requested a further report for the meeting on 22 June.

Recommendation

The report seeks the approval of the Governance Committee for the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change to enter into and maintain a recognition agreement with Unison to include recognition rights for employees on HAY; and Public Health/Agenda for Change grades for pay reviews.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The County Council does not have a formal recognition agreement with Unison although recognition has been exercised through practice over many years, for example through entering onto collective agreements on terms and conditions and consultation over proposed redundancies and business transfers where the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE applies). This report is primarily concerned with employees who are covered by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC). Of the three trade unions on the NJC, Unison is the only one representing employees in the County Council.
- 1.2 Annual cost of living pay reviews for most employees are undertaken through national collective bargaining which is incorporated into individual contracts of employment. Employees on SMG4, HAY; and Public Health/Agenda for Change terms and conditions (approximately 512 employees) are not covered by these national arrangements. Pay reviews for these employees is a local decision made by the Chief Executive, after direct consultation with individual employees. Although Unison is consulted during this process there is no formal negotiation with Unison as part of the process.

- 1.3 In September 2018 Unison requested recognition for employees on SMG4, HAY; and Public Health/Agenda for Change terms and conditions. Unison's request followed a contentious pay review in Summer 2018 and was specifically for recognition regarding the local and annual pay review and for any proposals for variation to pay systems. This is the first stage in a process that can lead to a statutory declaration of union recognition through the Central Arbitration Committee.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/central-arbitration-committee>
- 1.4 Initial progress in discussing recognition stalled as the relationship with Unison became increasingly strained. Progress recommenced over the summer of 2019 and a draft agreement was reached but progress was paused pending appointment of a new Chief Executive and Director HR&OC.

2. Trade Union Recognition

- 2.1. A trade union is recognised by an employer when the parties engage in collective bargaining through a statutory or voluntary process. Collective bargaining is defined as being "negotiations relating to or connected with" one or more of the following for a defined group of employees:
- a) terms and conditions of employment (including physical conditions of work);
 - b) engagement or non-engagement, or termination or suspension of employment of a worker or workers;
 - c) allocation of work or duties between workers;
 - d) disciplinary issues;
 - e) a worker's membership or non-membership of the union;
 - f) facilities for union officials; or
 - g) machinery for negotiation and consultation.
- 2.2. Trade union recognition may be a voluntary arrangement or imposed through a statutory process by application to the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC).
- 2.3. Voluntary recognition is a matter of agreement between the employer and the trade union, with recognition for an agreed group(s) of workers (bargaining units) for the purposes the parties agree. It will typically: be set out in writing; be accompanied by an agreement on trade union facilities (release time, use of premises, access to equipment, resources etc) and include a provision for either side to give notice that it wishes to withdraw from the arrangement, often between three and six months.
- 2.4. In the first instance the statutory process encourages the parties to reach agreement between themselves on a voluntary basis. If this is not achieved the CAC will determine: the make-up of the bargaining unit (the group of workers covered by recognition); determine whether recognition should be granted and if so the process for collective bargaining.
- 2.5. The basic principle is that statutory recognition will be granted if the union demonstrates that most workers in the bargaining unit wish it. The CAC may make a declaration without a ballot if more than 50% of the workers in

the bargaining unit are members of the union. If a ballot is held, the threshold for recognition is:

- a) a majority of employees in the ballot voting to recognise the union and
- b) at least 40% of the employees in the bargaining unit voting to recognise the union.

2.6. Unison state that their membership is close to the 50% of the proposed bargaining unit (employees on Hay and AfC grades).

2.7. Statutory recognition gives the union a legal right to the following:

- a) Participate in collective bargaining on pay, hours and annual leave on behalf of all workers in the bargaining unit.
- b) To receive information prior to conducting collective bargaining;
- c) To receive information and be consulted on health and safety issues;
- d) To receive information and be consulted on certain pension issues;
- e) Paid time off for union officials to carry out union duties or undergo industrial relations training;
- f) To information and consultation on proposed redundancies; and
- g) To information and consultation in connection with the proposed transfer of and an undertaking.

2.8. In practice Unison is already recognised for these purposes for employees on Hay and AfC grades so statutory recognition will mean little change other than introducing local collective bargaining for pay awards for employees on Hay and AfC grades, i.e. the addition of the pay provision at paragraph 2.7(a) above.

2.9. The following additional implications also arise from the statutory process:

- a) Where the parties agree recognition voluntarily after the union has made an application for statutory recognition (the employer having previously refused the request before the statutory process starts), the employer cannot unilaterally terminate the agreement for three years, but the union can end it at any time.
- b) Statutory recognition will be in place for at least three years unless both parties agree to end the arrangement earlier.
- c) Statutory recognition can be ended through the employer applying for statutory de-recognition (which cannot be done for three years after recognition is granted). The statutory process for de-recognition (similar to that for recognition) is unlikely to succeed unless union membership falls in the bargaining unit.
- d) Any future changes to the bargaining unit (for example following changes in organisation structure, worker numbers etc) will require both sides to follow a statutory process and apply to the CAC.
- e) Where the CAC specifies the method of collective bargaining, that method is legally binding and enforceable through the courts.

3. Proposal

- 3.1. It is proposed to enter into a voluntary recognition agreement with Unison that will:
- a) Introduce recognition for pay purposes for approximately 497 employees on Hay grades and Public Health Agenda for Change terms and conditions (this is already in place for other NJC staff).
 - b) Mean that any future cost of living pay awards or changes to pay structures for this group, will be negotiated with Unison with the outcome applying to all employees irrespective of whether they are trade union members. Individual employees will be kept informed of proposals and still be able to contribute their views.
 - c) Document and clarify the groups of employees that Unison is already recognised for, regarding redundancy consultation and business transfers (TUPE); clarifying what has been the practice in the County Council for many years.
 - d) Set out trade union facility time arrangements although no significant increase in facility time costs is expected.
- 3.2. Unison initially requested the inclusion of SMG4 within the voluntary recognition agreement. This group was included in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 local pay negotiations. However, this group are already recognised for all T&Cs other than the annual pay award. In discussion with Unison, HR put the view that it wished to retain more control over this group's pay and therefore be able to link it to performance more readily, hence the recommendation not to include this group.
- 3.3. Other than introducing recognition for pay reviews for employees on Hay and Public Health Agenda for Change grades the proposed recognition agreement will not change current practices. It will regularise current arrangements which are not documented and provide clarity in areas which in the past have been issues of dispute and tension.
- 3.4. Entering into a voluntary agreement will avoid completion of the statutory recognition process through the Central Arbitration Committee and the disadvantages that may come with that:
- a) An outcome of statutory recognition that leaves WSCC with less control compared to a voluntary agreement and being dependant on Unison's agreement or a statutory process to make future changes (also see 2.9 above).
 - b) Occupying HR and/or legal resource in responding to the statutory recognition process (analysing Unison evidence, gathering own evidence, preparing responses to CAC, liaising with the person appointed to oversee a ballot, attending hearings etc).
 - c) Creation of further tension with Unison, lower employee engagement and a distraction from normal business.

- d) Negative publicity and adverse reputational impact associated with the imposition of statutory arrangements where an employer is unable to resolve differences internally.

- 3.5. Entering into a voluntary agreement will also be a constructive step in rebuilding a relationship that had become strained and signal the intention of a more positive engagement with Unison and staff generally which is valuable as we move forward with delivering on our priorities and service improvement plans.

4. Resources

- 4.1. There are no specific resource requirements from the proposal.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. Discussions have taken place with Unison and a draft recognition agreement has been agreed in principle.
- 5.2. For employees on Hay and Public Health Agenda for Change grades, the proposal will mean that future pay reviews will be negotiated with Unison rather than consulting all postholders individually. Employees impacted by the proposal have been consulted and no adverse responses have been received from staff.

6. Risk Implications and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Unison seeks and obtains statutory recognition (which might extend to employees on SMG4 grades).	Entering into a voluntary agreement will prevent the statutory process being pursued, avoid time and money responding to this statutory process and keep the County Council in greater control of the outcome.
The pay negotiations with Unison become unwieldy and the improved relationship with Unison does not materialise.	The proposed agreement will contain provision for either party to service six months' notice to end the agreement.

Other Options Considered

- 6.1 The option exists to decline Unison's request in which case an application to the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) for statutory recognition will proceed. Time and resources will need to be invested in responding to this process and there is a strong likelihood, given the level of Unison membership, that statutory recognition will be granted. There is also the possibility of statutory recognition including the SMG4 group which is excluded from the voluntary recognition proposal. A return to a more challenging relationship with Unison could also be expected at a time when

we are seeking positive engagement and wishing to take the trade unions and staff with us on our improvement journey.

- 6.2 An alternative consideration would be to offer an undertaking that future pay awards for Hay and Agenda for Change employees will reflect nationally negotiated cost of living pay reviews. Whilst this would have the advantage of removing a need for separate pay bargaining arrangements with Unison, it would limit the flexibility to seek outcomes that better reflect the County Council's priorities. Neither would it enable the same opportunity to regularise existing recognition arrangements that are not documented.

7. Equality Duty

- 7.1 There are no specific equality implications arising from the proposal.

8. Social Value

- 8.1 There are no specific implications.

9. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 9.1 There are no specific implications.

10. Human Rights Implications

- 10.1 There are no specific implications.

Sue F. Evans

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Background Papers

None

Governance Committee
22 June 2020 Part I
Notice of Motion on Abuse of Members and Staff
Report by the Director of Law and Assurance and the Interim Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change

Summary

A notice of motion on the Abuse of Members and Staff was put to the County Council by Cllr David Edwards in December 2019 and was referred to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources for consideration. The Cabinet Member is broadly supportive of the aims of the motion and has initiated several workstreams to investigate opportunities in support of the proposals, including revisions to the policy on dealing with malicious communications, which the Committee is asked to approve. The report also includes an update on action taken to address the other issues raised on the motion.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Approve the revised Policy on Dealing with unreasonable complaints and unacceptable behaviour (attached at Appendix A); and
- (2) Note the action taken to date to address issues raised in the notice of motion.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 A notice of motion on Abuse of Members and Staff was put to the County Council in December 2019 by Cllr David Edwards. This asked for more to be done to address the abuse of members and staff. The Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources was asked to:
 - (a) Lobby the Government to broaden the definition of a hate crime to include the victim's political beliefs in order to prevent elected members being threatened for expressing different political opinions;
 - (b) Devise a policy for dealing with malicious communication;
 - (c) Provide elected members and officers with training on dealing with malicious communication; and

- (d) Compile a register of people who send or verbalise malicious communication in any format in order to better protect members and staff.
- 1.2 The Chairman referred the motion to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources who held a meeting with Cllr Edwards on 14 April to discuss the proposals. The Cabinet Member is broadly supportive of the aims of the motion and has initiated several workstreams to investigate opportunities in support of the proposals. Of specific relevance to the Governance Committee is the proposed revision of the Procedure and Guidance on Handling Unreasonably Persistent Complainants and Unacceptable Behaviour.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 Details of the workstreams on each of the notice of motion recommendations are set out below, including as appropriate outcomes and proposed actions.
- 2.2 **Lobbying the Government to broaden the definition of hate crime:** a letter of enquiry has been sent to the Local Government Association (LGA) to find out if other local authorities have made representation on this matter. The letter also asked if the LGA would assist in lobbying the Government to have abuse due to a victim's political beliefs included in the definition of 'hate crime'. A response to this letter is awaited and next steps will be agreed with the Cabinet Member in due course.
- 2.3 **Policy for dealing with malicious communication:** investigation was made into existing policy and guidance for members and officers. The document 'Procedure and Guidance on Handling Unreasonably Persistent Complainants and Unacceptable Behaviour' (attached at **Appendix A**) has been updated and extended to cover members as well as officers and arrangements made to ensure members know how to access it. The Committee is asked to endorse the document.
- 2.4 **Training for members and officers:** existing training available for officers and members has been explored. In addition to support offered on the LGA's website there are various internal training programmes offered via the Council's Learning and Development Gateway including: Unconscious Bias; Workplace Diplomacy, Communicating Under Pressure, Introduction To Dealing With Compliments And Complaints and a more detailed course, Responding To Complaints. While these courses are predominantly aimed at staff, members are also able to access these. It was felt, however, that it would be useful to consider drawing up a new training course with specific content for the role of the elected representative which could include:
- Information on what residents can expect from members
 - Key legislation - Malicious Communications Act 1988, s.1., Communications Act 2003, s.127 & Public Order Act 1986
 - What constitutes malicious communications
 - What constitutes persistent and unwanted communications
 - How to respond to communications
 - How to log and record incidents
 - Support available.

It is proposed that a report be taken to the Member Development Group in October for it to consider what tailored training and induction should be provided for members. The outcome of this work will be reported to this Committee.

- 2.5 **Compile a register of people who send or verbalise malicious communication:** the potential to hold and maintain a register has been examined with the Director Law and Assurance and has been addressed as part of the review of the policy review referred to in 2.3 above. A data privacy impact assessment was completed to ensure full compliance with data protection principles. Appropriate controls and safeguards have therefore been incorporated into the policy revision and the list will be closely managed within the customer relations team's arrangements. The criteria for inclusion and the actions to manage, control and remove from the list will be carefully managed in compliance with the policy should it be approved.

3. Resources

- 3.1 There may be costs arising from any training developed for members and officers. These costs can be met from within existing budgets.

Factors taken into account

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The development of proposals has involved consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources, the proposer of the motion, the LGA, the Interim Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change and members of her team and the Director of Law and Assurance. As the proposer of the notice of motion, Cllr Edwards has been invited to attend the Committee.

5. Risk Implications and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Data breach or misuse of personal data linked to policy on managing behaviour	A full data privacy impact assessment has been undertaken and the policy reflects the output of the DPIA
The policy and procedures are ineffective	Attention will be given to review the policy in light of experience and learning.

6. Other Options Considered

- 6.1 N/A

7. Equality Duty

- 7.1 This has been addressed as part of the DPIA referred to in the risk item above

8. Social Value

8.1 It is not considered that the social value policy is engaged in this matter.

9. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

9.1 The issue of possible criminal conduct and how it may be avoided or mitigated will be addressed in the actions referred to in this report.

10. Human Rights Implications

10.1 This is covered within the measures to address data privacy.

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Appendix A

Procedure and Guidance on Handling Unreasonably Persistent Complainants and Unacceptable Behaviour

Background Papers

None

West Sussex County Council

Procedure and Guidance on Handling Unreasonably Persistent Complainants and Unacceptable Behaviour

Introduction

The aim of the County Council's complaints procedure is to provide our customers with a fair, objective and consistent process that will resolve the complaint as quickly as possible. If they remain dissatisfied with the response we will tell the customer how they can appeal against our decision and take matters further. However, the County Council also has an obligation to use resources efficiently and effectively and there may be occasions where the Council will decide that a complainant is demonstrating behaviour which is unreasonably persistent or unacceptable.

Aim of Guidance

The aim of this guidance is:

- To provide definitions of unreasonably persistent complainants and unacceptable behaviour
- To provide a corporate approach to respond fairly to such behaviour
- To ensure that other service users, County Council staff or the County Council do not suffer any detriment from people making unreasonably persistent complaints or behaving in an unacceptable way
- To recognise the rights of complainants under the Human Rights Act 1998 and other relevant sources.

Section A – Handling Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Complainants

1. Definition of an Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Complainant

For the purpose of this guidance, **unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants are those complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with us, cause or are likely to cause excessive and disproportionate demands upon staff, elected Members, or resources or cause offence or distress.**

It is important to differentiate between 'persistent' and 'unreasonably persistent' complainants. Many of the people who submit complaints are 'persistent' on the entirely reasonable basis that they feel the County Council has not dealt with their complaint properly and are not prepared to leave the matter there.

Unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants may have justified complaints or grievances but be pursuing them in inappropriate ways, or they may be intent on pursuing complaints which have no substance, or which have already been investigated and determined. Their contacts with the Council may be amicable but still place very heavy demands on staff and/or Member time.

Sometimes the person's behaviour is or becomes unacceptable, for example, abusive, offensive or threatening. This is dealt with at the end of this guidance.

For the purposes of this procedure, complainants may be deemed unreasonably persistent if they demonstrate one or more of the following behaviours:

- a) Continuing to pursue a complaint where the County Council's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted, or where the substance of the complaint has been fully aired in another forum (including complaints panels). This includes seeking an unrealistic outcome for the complaint.
- b) Submitting repeat complaints, after complaints processes have been completed, about the same issues, or with additions/variations which the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints.
- c) Refusing to accept the complaint outcome – repeatedly arguing the point and complaining about the decision.
- d) Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance with this from the authority's staff.
- e) Refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- f) Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways that are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
- g) Making what appear to be groundless complaints about the staff dealing with the complaints, and seeking to have the complaint dealt with by others or through a different route.
- h) Having an excessive number of contacts with County Council staff and/or Members while a complaint is being looked into – placing unreasonable demands on staff and/or Members, such as repeated or lengthy 'phone calls, requests for personal interviews or lengthy or frequent correspondence.
- i) Changing the substance of a complaint or continually raising new issues whilst the complaint is being investigated, or raising large numbers of detailed points and insisting they are all fully answered.
- j) Raising a very large number of complaints which, upon investigation cannot be substantiated.
- k) Adopting a 'scattergun' approach: pursuing a complaint or complaints with different internal and/or external persons or organisations at the same time or generating concurrent enquiries about the same matter.
- l) Denying receiving an adequate response in spite of correspondence specifically responding to their complaint.

2. Dealing with Unreasonably Persistent Complainants

It is emphasised that this approach should be used only after all reasonable measures have been taken to try to resolve a complaint by following the West Sussex County Council complaints procedure. **The Customer Relations Manager or Complaints and Representations Manager should always be involved.**

A complainant may be identified as unreasonably persistent at any stage of the complaints procedure and action should be determined by the seriousness of the conduct **not** the stage it has reached in the complaints procedure. In exceptional cases the steps below may be combined.

3. Prior to taking action

Where officers and/or Members identify that they may be dealing with an unreasonably persistent complainant in accordance with the above criteria, the case should be referred as soon as possible to the Head of Service or Director relevant to the subject matter of the complaint. Before deciding whether the procedure should be applied the Head of Service or Director should be satisfied that:

- the complaint is being or has been investigated properly;
- any decision taken has been in accordance with the complaints policy;
- communications with the complainant have been appropriate; and
- the complainant is not now providing any significant new information that might affect the County Council's view on the complaint.

If satisfied on these points, he or she should consider whether further action is necessary prior to taking the decision to designate the complainant as unreasonable or unreasonably persistent. Examples might be:

- If no meeting has taken place between the complainant and an officer/officers and provided that nothing is known about the complainant which would make this unadvisable, consider offering the complainant a meeting with an officer of appropriate seniority. Sometimes such meetings can dispel misunderstandings and move matters towards a resolution.
- If more than one directorate is being contacted by an unreasonably persistent complainant, consider:
 - setting up a strategy meeting to agree a joint approach; and
 - designating a key officer to co-ordinate the County Council's response(s).
- If the complainant has special needs, an advocate might be helpful to both parties: consider offering to help the complainant find an independent one.

4. Action

Step 1 - Warning Before applying any restrictions give the complainant a warning that if his/her actions continue the Council may decide to treat him/her as an unreasonably persistent complainant and explain why. If, following the warning, the complainant ceases his/her actions then no further steps are necessary. If the complainant resumes or repeats his/her actions, then consideration should be given as to whether a reminder would be appropriate before moving to the next steps. The time-period between warning and resumption of the actions will be an important factor in these considerations.

Step 2 – Designate as unreasonable and impose restrictions The action to take in relation to an unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainant should be appropriate and proportionate to the nature and frequency of behaviour. The following list is a 'menu' of possible options for managing a complainant's involvement from which one or more might be chosen and applied, **if warranted**. It is not exhaustive and often local factors will be relevant in deciding what might be appropriate action:

1. To withdraw or restrict contact with the complainant either in person, by telephone, by letter/e-mail or any combination of these. One form of contact must always be maintained with the complainant, although this may be restricted e.g. the complainant could be notified that telephone calls will be taken only at specific times of specific days and may be time-limited, that correspondence must be in writing, or that only a nominated staff member will deal with their calls in the future and any appointments must be made with that nominated member of staff.
2. To notify the person that no further action on the complaint (whether completed or not) will be taken. In appropriate cases this will be combined with 5 below.
3. To inform the person that contact will be made only through a legal or other representative nominated by the complainant
4. To inform the complainant that contact will not be made with their current representative where that person is the cause of concern.
5. To notify the complainant that they have the right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman's office (and to supply the relevant form) or other appellate body such as the Information Commissioner.

If, after due warning, the Head of Service or Director decides to designate the complainant as unreasonably persistent, inform the complainant clearly and promptly in writing:

- that the decision has been taken;
- the reasons for it;
- what it means for his or her contacts with the County Council;
- how long any restrictions will last; and

that they have the right to ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to consider the Council's decision and actions. The action taken and reasons should be documented in the relevant complaint file and circulated to any other officers and/or Members involved in the complaint. The Chief Executive and other potential contacts (such as Director's PA and Customer Service Centre Manager) should also be informed.

Step 3 – Further restrictions and/or legal action If the person continues to contact the County Council and it is clear that they will not accept the County Council's decision on the matter and all appropriate avenues of internal review or appeal have been exhausted, the Head of Service or Director should refer the case to the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. They will consider the evidence available and determine what further action to take. At this stage the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer may decide:

To notify the person in writing that any correspondence received on the same matter will be read and filed but responded to only if the person provides significant, new information relating to their complaint, or raises new issues which, in the County Council's opinion, warrants a new investigation

In exceptional circumstances to take legal action.

The decision will be notified to the complainant in writing. This notification should be copied for information to officers and Members involved in the complaint or likely to be contacted by the complainant.

Record of Complainants

It is the responsibility of the Customer Relations Team to maintain an up to date record of complainants who have been designated unreasonably persistent

Further Complaints

Any further complaints or communication received from an unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainant must be reviewed by the relevant officers to ensure that it does not contain fresh and relevant information about the original complaint, which would require a further review of the complaint, or a genuine new complaint that deserves a response.

5. Withdrawing Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Status

Once a complainant has been determined as unreasonable or unreasonably persistent there must be a plan to review by the officer taking the original decision to designate and to consider withdrawing this status if a complainant demonstrates a more reasonable approach, or if they submit a further complaint for which the normal complaints procedure would appear appropriate. Where this is the case, discussion will be held with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and, subject to their approval, normal contact with the complainant will then be resumed. The complainant will be advised of this in writing.

6. Referring unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

In some cases, relations between the County Council and complainants break down while complaints are under investigation and there is little prospect of achieving a satisfactory outcome. In such circumstances there is little purpose in following through all stages of the County Council's complaints procedure and, where this occurs, the Ombudsman may be prepared to consider complaints before complaints procedures have been exhausted. This is the case even in respect of statutory complaints procedures. If this option is being considered, the advice of the Customer Relations Manager or Complaints and Representations Manager must be sought.

A complainant who has been designated an unreasonably persistent complainant may make a complaint to the Ombudsman about the way in which he or she has been treated. The Ombudsman is unlikely to be critical of the County Council's action if it can show that the decision has been taken properly and fairly.

Section B – Handling Unacceptable Behaviour

7. Definition of and Guidance on unacceptable behaviour

The County Council does not expect its staff or members to tolerate behaviour by customers that is unacceptable and will take action to protect them from that behaviour. This is defined as:

Conduct towards County Council staff, elected Members, or others acting on the County Council's behalf (referred to in this document as

representatives) **which is abusive, offensive or threatening, or using or threatening the use of violence or harm to people or property.**

Such behaviour may include:

- harassing or being personally abusive or verbally aggressive towards the Council's representatives
- behaving aggressively or threateningly towards the Council's property, reputation or individual representatives
- targeting high numbers of e-mails or telephone calls to a particular representative or to several representatives, repeating demands or expecting immediate responses on the same or similar issues
- Using communications or social media to make repeated and unwarranted comments about the Council or its representatives so as to cause offence or distress or in order to damage the reputation of the representative or the Council.

Staff must document all instances of such behaviour and report it to their manager, who should assess the risks posed by the behaviour and ensure that any incident of abuse or aggression, including verbal abuse and threats, is reported using the online Incident Reporting Form.

Elected members should retain and document any instances of such behaviour and make the record available to an officer in Democratic Services who will access the Incident Reporting Form and will consider whether to escalate the matter to the Monitoring Officer.

Incidents of this type which take place via email or telephone may be in breach of s127 of the Communications Act 2003, which covers offensive and threatening messages sent over a "public" electronic communications network.

Whether in person or via 'phone/email/letter/social media, where the behaviour is an immediate threat to the safety and welfare of staff, it should be reported to the Head of Service who may consider reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action through the Monitoring Officer. In such extreme cases, and after advice from the Monitoring Officer, the Service may choose not to give the complainant prior warning of such action. For members, any such immediate threats to their safety and welfare should be reported direct to the Monitoring Officer or to Democratic Services

It is important to be aware of the cumulative psychological impact of specifically targeted communications. Staff and members should be protected from this sort of harassment which can be personal and damaging. For staff, managers could consider intervening with the sender or re-allocating responsibility so that, in extreme cases, the staff affected can "Block Sender" from their Inbox. Managers should ensure that residents who are contacting the service in this way have had access to the complaints procedure in the first instance so that legitimate concerns can be addressed. Managers should also ensure that staff who are affected in this way are aware of the support available from the Employee Assistance Programme.

Options available to members in dealing with such harassment include blocking emails and referring residents to the Council's complaints procedure. Advice can

be provided by the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services. Members are also able to access support through the Employee Assistance Programme (and information on this is available to members via the Mine – the Members' Information Network).

Where unacceptable behaviour occurs, the three-step approach outlined above for dealing with unreasonably persistent complainants will be applied. The same considerations and processes shall be used for informing the individual of the decision and for reviewing the decision. *See below for guidance on dealing with unacceptable behaviour during a telephone conversation.*

Dealing with unacceptable behaviour during a telephone conversation or other media

When a caller swears/shouts/talks over/refuses to listen to advice, you should take the following steps:

First chance: "Please refrain from swearing/shouting at/talking over me. If you continue I will not be able to help you".

Second chance: "Please refrain from swearing/shouting at/talking over me. As I have said, if you continue I will not be able to help you and will have to terminate the call"

Third chance: "I am sorry but as you have continued to swear/shout at/talk over me I am not able to help you and I am now going to terminate this call"

You should immediately document any calls ending in this fashion and refer these to the appropriate senior officer or (for members) Democratic Services.

Staff and members should try to avoid engaging in further contact or communication with any person who has become abusive or offensive through email or through social media. If such contact persists inspite of discouragement the matter should be reported to a senior officer or, for members, to Democratic Services

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Governance Committee
22 June 2020
Part I
Member Development Working Group: Phase 2 – Role of Councillor and updates on Phase 1 - Removing barriers to stand for election
Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Summary

The Member Development Working Group has completed phase 2 of its work. It has considered the role of a councillor and has also considered the support available to members to enable them to fulfil their role, thereby removing barriers to standing for election.

The Working Group has prepared a new member job description and a series of documents entitled 'Fulfilling the Member Role' which it proposes can form the basis of information to be made available on the 'Be a Councillor' resources issued by the County Council ahead of the 2021 elections.

Recommendations

- (1) That the draft job description in Appendix A and amendments to specific job descriptions in paragraph 2.2 be approved;
- (2) That the 'Fulfilling the Member Role' document in Appendix C and supporting documents in Appendices D to F be approved.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The Working Group has met during 2019 to review the member role and to identify ways of removing barriers to standing for election. It has also continued to deliver phase 1, encouraging people to stand for election.
- 1.2 The Working Group comprises Cllr Duncton (Chairman), Cllr O'Kelly, Cllr Sparkes, Cllr Sudan and Cllr Wickremaratchi.
- 1.3 The Working Group reported to the Member Development Group on 2 February 2020, which supported the working group's recommendations.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Working Group proposes some amendments to the member job descriptions that previously existed as part of the Constitution. The main change proposed is to adopt a new general job description. It does not seek to make any fundamental change to the member role, but tries to make

description clearer and shorter. The proposed new job description is attached at Appendix A. Appendix B shows the current job description, for comparison.

- 2.2 The Working Group surveyed members with special responsibility allowances to check their views about the job descriptions for other roles. The Group was satisfied that these remained fit for purpose, simply recommending two minor changes:
- On the job description for Cabinet Members, paragraph 14, to clarify that advisers and senior advisers to cabinet member should only be appointed by the Leader 'when applicable'.
 - On the job description for non-Executive Committee Chairmen, paragraph 4 on liaison with internal stakeholders should be amended to include 'liaison with external partners where appropriate'. This was raised by the Chairman of the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee, who liaises with external audit on a regular basis.
- 2.3 The Working Group recommends that the new job descriptions be endorsed for submission to the Governance Committee and that these then be included in 'be a councillor' resources. It was also emphasised that Democratic Services should ensure that members are shown the job descriptions when new members are considering taking on or starting new roles, at any point in the four-year council cycle.
- 2.4 The other area of work during phase 2 has been to consider ways of removing barriers, or perceived barriers, to standing for election. This has led to the production of a draft 'Fulfilling the Member Role' document which is attached at appendix C. This seeks to set out the range of support currently available to members, but makes it more explicit. Draft policies have been prepared on parental leave and other special leave. The Working Group believes that publishing these documents in 'be a councillor' resources will be beneficial in showing that a good range of support is available.
- 2.5 The Working Group recommends that the 'Fulfilling the Member Role' and its supporting documents be endorsed for submission to the Governance Committee.
- 2.6 The Working Group also considered outstanding actions from phase 1. Most of these are now complete or underway.
- 2.7 The Working Group will now commence phase 3 of the project, to review the information and events provided to candidates as well as developing the member induction programme.

3. Resources

- 3.1 Most of the material in the 'Fulfilling the Member Role' document simply makes existing provisions more explicit, so it is expected that this may lead to a small increase in member allowances, but this is likely to be modest and should be managed within existing resources.

Factors taken into account

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The Working Group consulted holders of Special Responsibility Allowances on their job descriptions. Comments largely agreed that the existing wording was accurate, aside from the comments mentioned in paragraph 2.2 above.
- 4.2 The Working Group has asked the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to consider whether people taking parental leave should continue to receive any sort of special responsibility allowance. The Working Group's initial view was that they should not, but it wanted to seek the view of the IRP.

5. Risk Implications and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Elected members do not reflect the communities they represent	The 'be a councillor' work, together with the documents proposed for approval, should help more people to feel able to stand for election, giving more likelihood that the membership will reflect the communities that they represent.

6. Other Options Considered

- 6.1 The County Council is not obliged to have a member job description or publish documents that help members to fulfil their role. It is felt, however, that having these documents available can only help more people to consider the role and take an informed decision about whether they stand for election.

7. Equality Duty

- 7.1 Removing barriers to election should enable people with protected characteristics to stand for election. This includes explicitly supporting people with disabilities through providing reasonable adjustments.

8. Social Value

- 8.1 Not applicable.

9. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 9.1 Not applicable.

10. Human Rights Implications

- 10.1 Not applicable.

Tony Kershaw

Director of Law and Assurance

Contact: Charles Gauntlett 033022 22524

Appendices

Appendix A – Revised Member Job Description

Appendix B – Current Job Description

Appendix C – Fulfilling the Member Role

Appendix D – Meeting Arrangements

Appendix E – Draft Parental Leave Policy

Appendix F – Draft Special Leave Policy

Background Papers

None.

Member Job Description

As a democratically elected local representative, members of the County Council hold a unique position and the potential to make a real difference to people's lives.

As one of the 70 members of the County Council, councillors are not only responsible for representing around 9,000 residents in your division, but also the 800,000+ people who live in West Sussex, local businesses and those who work in or visit the county who also use some of the County Councils' services. Members are expected to carry out their duties in the public interest, equally and without discrimination.

To fulfil their **strategic role** members are expected to:

1. Participate in the effective and responsible management of the County Council by contributing or scrutinising its budget, strategies and policies, its commissioning activity and the services it delivers.
2. Act as the County Council's representative on such outside bodies or organisations which they are appointed by the County Council.
3. Dedicate adequate time to fulfil their role as a member and attend all meetings they are a member of or have been appointed to whenever possible.
4. Lead by example in setting high standards of conduct in public life as defined by the [Nolan Principles](#).
5. Participate in induction training and ongoing training and development to maintain skills and knowledge.
6. Develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's services, management arrangements, functions/duties and constraints and to develop good working relationships with relevant officers of the authority.
7. To act as a Corporate Parent for children in the care of the County Council.

A councillor's primary role is to represent the residents within their electoral division. Members provide a bridge between the community and the County Council by being an advocate for their local residents and signposting them to the right people at the council. Therefore, members need to keep themselves informed about the issues that affect their community.

In their **local role**, members are expected to:

1. Community Leadership

- Be accessible locally, offer clear ways for the community to get in touch, have good personal networks and are visible to interact with the local voluntary and community sector
- Communicate with residents utilising local opportunities for surgeries, attending community events/meetings, social media and newsletters

- Keep up to date about local and County matters that may affect their residents
- Work with local community groups who are interested in supporting/developing improved local services
- Understand how the Council operates and are able to explain this to their residents including the strategic role of the County Council
- Explain how Council policy may affect a community and how a community can influence future policy

2. Making Things Happen

- Attend meetings of the County Local Committee(s)/Area Committee(s) for the area that they represent
- Are knowledgeable about the Council and its services and who does what or are willing to find out
- Manage expectations, offer alternatives and explain what cannot be done
- Help, where possible, to solve problems for local residents
- Work collaboratively within the Council and the community
- Campaign if appropriate

3. Community Involvement

- Maintain partnership links with members from the other tiers of local government to promote efficiencies and a 'One Council' approach to local service delivery
- Help, where possible, to solve local issues in liaison with staff, partners and other local organisations
- Visit local community organisations, understand the role they play in the community, help with local issues and support their sustainability
- Represent local community life, the local needs of the most vulnerable and the need to work in partnership and foster strong relationships with local community leaders.
- Work with Officers to ensure appropriate local solutions are supported to improve the resilience of communities
- Sit on other local bodies as required/appropriate

4. Listening to Residents

- Are aware of local issues and concerns
- Listen well and act decisively when all the evidence is available
- Are friendly and approachable
- Hold surgeries or have other mechanisms for being available to people

5. Representing Communities

- Represent ALL residents and members of the community ensuring that their needs as customers are met wherever possible
- Are aware of the performance of the County Council generally and in their division and act to address low or poor performance
- Make the views of the community known

6. Behaving Ethically

County Councillors:

- Observe the County Council's adopted Code of Conduct
- Register interests as appropriate
- Are aware of the County Council's Constitution
- Respect everyone in the community and treat people as individual

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Member Job Descriptions

Duties associated with being a Member of West Sussex County Council

In accordance with the Constitutional arrangements of the County Council all members of the Council are expected to carry out their duties serving all of their communities equally and without discrimination, in accordance with the Council's equality and diversity policy and the Code of Conduct for members. Each member of the County Council shall:

1. Participate in the good governance of the county, represent the strategic interests of the county as a whole and contribute actively to the formation and scrutiny of the County Council's strategies, policies, budgets, commissioning activity and service delivery.
2. Represent effectively the needs and interests of the division for which the Councillor was elected (both as an individual community representative and through active participation in the County Local Committee for the area). Use best endeavours to represent the interests and concerns of all constituents in the member's division and deal effectively with constituency enquiries and representations. Communicate and consult with all such constituents on all County Council business and other issues affecting or relevant to the interests of those constituents so far as appropriate and reasonably practicable.
3. Champion the causes which best relate to the interests and sustainability of the community and campaign for the improvement of the quality of life of the community in terms of fairness, the economy and the environment.
4. Act as the County Council's representative on such outside bodies or organisations to which they have been appointed by the County Council. Be aware of any conflicts which may arise between this obligation and any which the body or organisation may wish the member to assume and seek advice from the Director of Law and Assurance or other relevant County Council officer when appropriate. Alert the relevant Cabinet Member and/or Leader to any contentious issue arising and, in the case of organisations of county-wide significance, make an annual report to the relevant Cabinet Member.
5. Commit themselves to provide sufficient time towards maintaining effective contributions to County Council and the local community and, to this end attend all meetings of committees or groups of which they are a member unless prevented from doing so by circumstances beyond the member's control.
6. Lead by example, in accordance with the highest standards of probity in public life and not bring the reputation of the County Council into disrepute.
7. To ensure that skills and knowledge are maintained through training and development.

8. Keep abreast of and contribute to new initiatives relating to the County Council, how it commissions and delivers services, and how it engages with local communities sufficient to ensure effective performance as a councillor.
9. Develop effective working relationships based on mutual respect and co-operation with all officers with whom the member may need to deal in the performance of their various roles.

The role of a Member in West Sussex:

A County Councillor is 'One who is a supported, confident, talented and professional community leader. One who understands but can also transform their place. One who can think strategically, as well as be informed and inspired by their local roots.'

Leadership Centre for Local Government

To carry out his/her duties, a good councillor will demonstrate the characteristics below:

Listening to residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aware of local issues and concerns ✓ Listens well and act decisively with evidence ✓ Friendly and approachable ✓ Holds surgeries and mechanisms for being available to people ✓ Helps residents communicate with the Council 	Making Things Happen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Involved in decision-making ✓ Attends meetings of groups appointed to (County Council, Scrutiny, CLCs etc) ✓ Knowledgeable about the Council and its services ✓ Works collaboratively – managing expectations, helps bring about local solutions to problems 	Community Involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintains link with businesses and local groups ✓ Keeps in touch with local councils and residents' groups ✓ Willing to be involved in community life ✓ Sits on local bodies as required ✓ In touch with other public services and bodies ✓ Awareness of role as Corporate Parent
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Representing Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Represents ALL residents and community members ✓ Makes views of community known ✓ Champions local interests ✓ Awareness of and acts upon poor performance by the Council 	Community Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Well known/good networks ✓ Communicates with residents ✓ Up-to-date with local and county matters ✓ Knows how the Council works ✓ Able to explain how County Council policy may affect a community 	Behaving Ethically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Observes Code of Conduct ✓ Registers and declares appropriate Interests ✓ Awareness of Constitution ✓ Commits to necessary training to carry out the role ✓ Respects everyone in the community and treats people as individuals
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Annex

Members' Roles in the Community

Statement of Values/Behaviours

1. Community Leadership

County Councillors:

- Are well known locally, have good personal networks and are easily contactable
- Communicate with residents in a variety of ways such as surgeries, newsletters etc.
- Keep up to date about local and County matters that may affect their residents
- Understand how the Council operates and are able to explain this to their residents including the strategic role of the County Council
- Can explain how Council policy may affect a community

2. Making Things Happen

County Councillors:

- Are involved in decision making
- Attend meetings of the full County Council (six a year), Select and other Committees to which they have been appointed
- Attend meetings of the County Local Committee(s)/Area Committee(s) for the area that they represent
- Are knowledgeable about the Council and its services and who does what or are willing to find out
- Manage expectations, offer alternatives and explain what cannot be done
- Help, where possible, to solve problems for local residents
- Work collaboratively within the Council and the community
- Campaign if appropriate

3. Community Involvement

County Councillors:

- Maintain links with local councils and other local and voluntary bodies in the community
- Help, where possible, to solve local issues in liaison with staff, partners and other local organisations
- Are willing to be involved in community life
- Sit on other local bodies as required/appropriate
- Have an awareness of their role as Corporate Parents

4. Listening to Residents

County Councillors:

- Are aware of local issues and concerns
- Listen well and act decisively when all the evidence is available
- Are friendly and approachable
- Hold surgeries or have other mechanisms for being available to people

5. Representing Communities

County Councillors:

- Represent ALL residents and members of the community ensuring that their needs as customers are met wherever possible
- Are aware of the performance of the County Council generally and in their division and act to address low or poor performance
- Make the views of the community known

6. Behaving Ethically

County Councillors:

- Observe the County Council's adopted Code of Conduct
- Register interests as appropriate
- Are aware of the County Council's Constitution
- Commit to training that helps support them in their role
- Respect everyone in the community and treat people as individuals

Fulfilling the Member Role

You can see information about what the member role entails in the separate section. When you become a County Councillor, you will be an office holder with major responsibilities and great opportunities. The County Council is committed to providing a range of support to you to enable you to fulfil the member role. This includes seeking to remove potential barriers.

Induction and Development

You will receive a comprehensive induction to help you understand your role, the range of services provided by the County Council and personal skills to help you to be effective in your role.

Mentoring is available within political groups.

The County Council has a Member Development Strategy (to be confirmed) and is committed to signing up to the 'Member Development Charter' (to be confirmed) which demonstrates the Council's commitment to giving members continuing development support. This can be through further development sessions on the services provided by the Council or considering significant changes to these services, personal skills training and the potential to attend external conferences and courses connected with the roles you hold on the Council.

Diversity

West Sussex County Council is an inclusive organisation and would like its county councillors to reflect the diverse nature of the residents it represents as much as possible. It wishes to encourage people from all walks of life, with different backgrounds and experience to consider standing for election.

Member support

The Council has a range of support available to help members in a variety of circumstances and from a wide range of backgrounds:

- Meeting arrangements set out, with mostly daytime meetings to leave most evenings free.
- You will receive a basic allowance of £11,875 to recompense you for the time and effort that you put into being a member. Additional special responsibility allowances are paid to members in senior roles.
- You can claim travel expenses for meetings you attend at County Hall and other meeting venues away from your local area, as well as site visits organised by the Council and parish council meetings in your area.
- Carer's allowance is available for care of children or other family members while you are on County Council business (currently up to £3,567 per annum for childcare and £7,541 per annum for dependants)
- A laptop giving access to a wide range of council information and a secure email address for correspondence.
- Reasonable adjustments can be made to support members with disabilities. Examples include an infrared hearing device that can be used in any meeting

room, specially adapted IT, papers produced to meet accessibility standards, the ability to use a taxi if a member is not able to drive a car or use public transport.

- Code of conduct to promote high standards of conduct
- Social media guidance
- Parental leave policy
- Special leave policy

Taking Time off from Work

It is a legal requirement that an employer should allow employees 'reasonable time' for volunteering for public service. The [GOV.UK](#) website gives advice. (good practice example employers will be listed here).

Personal Safety

The [Local Government Association](#) has useful guides on:

- Lone working
- Anti-harassment and safety

Other support can be made available. Please speak to a member of staff in Democratic Services to explore what support might help you or for further information. Contact: Charles Gauntlett, Senior Advisor on 033 022 22524.

Meeting arrangements

Timing of Meetings

The County Council is one of the largest councils in the country and holds several hundred meetings each year, on its range of political governance arrangements – Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees, non-Executive Committees and County Local Committees. A wide range of informal meetings are also part of the political governance arrangements, ranging from panels, boards, groups and pre-agenda meetings.

Because of the number of meetings held, West Sussex has long had a pattern of meetings that allows for up to three meetings a day, avoiding clashes for individual members – these are morning, afternoon and evening. Naturally, some of these meeting times will be more or less convenient for different members depending upon their personal circumstances. One particular challenge in West Sussex is the distance that some members will need to travel to reach County Hall, Chichester – a one-way journey from Crawley or East Grinstead can take an hour and a half.

Recognising that morning meetings will generally be easier for those members with caring responsibilities for school-age children, the morning meetings have a start time of 10.30 am, allowing school drop-offs in places like East Grinstead and Crawley before travelling to County Hall, Chichester. These meetings traditionally finish at 1 pm, allowing time to return for school pick-ups. Some meetings regularly finish later than this, but that is down to agenda planning for each committee.

The afternoon meetings begin at 2.15 pm and are typically shorter meetings – Governance, Standards and Rights of Way Committees are three that are organised in this time slot.

The evening meetings held are the County Local Committees – this is because they are local meetings held in the local area. A county-wide committee taking place in the evening at County Hall, Chichester, might meet from 7 pm to 10 pm, making a very late night for members travelling back to further parts of the county. The evening meetings of CLCs are usually three meetings a year for each member, giving capacity for attending other meetings in their divisions – most parish councils and district council meetings take place in the evening, which a local member may try to attend, or likewise residents' associations and other community groups. Limiting the number of evening meetings of the County Council makes it much more achievable for members on other councils to fulfil the additional roles.

Meeting Dates

Another consequence of a very busy member diary is that meeting days are not always consistent throughout the year – Dates are consistent in many cases:

Monday – Governance, Standards and Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committees.

Tuesday – Cabinet, Planning and Rights of Way Committees

Thursday – Executive Leadership Team meets in the afternoon.

Friday – County Council

The main committees that are not always consistent are the Scrutiny Committees – these are scheduled mostly for Wednesdays and Thursdays, with some Mondays and Fridays to ensure that the five committees meet reasonably close together in a cycle, with the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee coming last.

Officers preparing the member diary attempt to provide as much consistency as possible in sticking to certain meetings on certain days, but it is not possible to achieve this entirely with the current range of meetings. Meetings are not scheduled within the published local authority school holidays. The main exception to this is that the February County Council meeting is often within the half term holiday as a necessity because six weeks' notice must be given to district councils of the amount of council tax to be collected.

Virtual Meetings

It is clear under the Local Government Act 1972 that for formal meetings, a member is only present at a meeting if they are in the room at the time. This is important for voting and for counting towards a quorum for the meeting. It is possible for other participants to take part virtually, such as a witness taking part via a video-link.

Formal Virtual meeting arrangements are temporarily in place from April 2020 to May 2021 due to the public health emergency, so it is possible that greater flexibility may be retained after this.

Such requirements are not in place for informal meetings, as by definition, they are informal and have no delegated powers. Video-conferencing is now available routinely between County Hall, Chichester and County Hall North, Horsham. For any informal meeting, such as Business Planning Groups, Task and Finish Groups, Pre-agenda meetings, informal Panels or Boards, these meetings can include virtual participation, with some participants taking part in Horsham. This can be requested at any time. (The roll-out of 'Skype for Business' as telephony within the County Council also makes virtual participation possible from any location with a strong broadband connection using a Windows 10 County Council laptop. There are plans to install screens in Committee Rooms 1 and 2, so these could also be utilised for virtual attendance at informal meetings.)

Parental Leave – A Policy for Members

Parental leave covers maternity leave, paternity leave and adoption leave in employment law. Employees have certain entitlements in law to a period of leave with a continuation of employment and continuation of pay (of statutory parental leave pay).

Elected members are not employees - they are holding an elected office. They are entitled to continue to hold that office subject to meeting certain minimum criteria and are entitled to continue to receive their basic allowance, regardless of whether they are taking leave or not.

If a member informs the County Council that they will be taking a period of parental leave, the County Council will:

- Agree with the member, any group leader or neighbouring members about who will cover local casework for the member taking parental leave.
- Arrange an out of office message and webpage message to state that the member is taking a period of parental leave and stating the alternative member contact.
- Continue to pay the basic allowance that the member is entitled to receive.
- Agree with the member about how to cover the requirement that they must attend a meeting in a six-month period – either the member can choose to attend a meeting to meet this requirement, or a report can be prepared for Council to ask it to waive the requirement as the member is taking parental leave.
- If the member holds a special role, arrangements would need to be made for someone to cover them – possibly through an appointment by the County Council or by the Leader, for a time-limited period. It would then be for the Council or the Leader to undo the temporary arrangement and re-appoint the member who took parental leave. A special responsibility allowance would/would not be paid during this period (to be confirmed).

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Special Leave – A Policy for Members

Special leave arrangements are available to employees for sickness, bereavement and any other special circumstances that may lead them to be away from duties for a long period of time.

Elected members are not employees - they are holding an elected office. They are entitled to continue to hold that office subject to meeting certain minimum criteria and are entitled to continue to receive their basic allowance, regardless of whether they are taking leave or not.

If a member informs the County Council that they will be taking a period of special leave, the County Council will:

- Agree with the member, any group leader or neighbouring members about who will cover local casework for the member taking special leave.
- Arrange an out of office message and webpage message to state that the member is taking a period of special leave and stating the alternative member contact.
- Continue to pay the basic allowance that the member is entitled to receive.
- Agree with the member about how to cover the requirement that they must attend a meeting in a six-month period if applicable – either the member can choose to attend a meeting to meet this requirement, or a report can be prepared for Council to ask it to waive the requirement as the member is taking special leave.
- If the member holds a special role, arrangements would need to be made for someone to cover them – possibly through an appointment by the County Council or by the Leader, for a time-limited period. It would then be for the Council or the Leader to undo the temporary arrangement and re-appoint the member who took special leave. A special responsibility allowance would/would not be paid during this period (to be confirmed).

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Governance Committee
22 June 2020
Part I
Proposed Member Development Strategy
Report by Chairman, Member Development Group
Electoral Divisions: All

Summary

This report presents the draft Member Development Strategy for consideration, following agreement by the Member Development Group (MDG) that the Council should undertake South East Employers' 'Charter for Elected Member Development', as supported by the Governance Committee at its meeting in September 2019.

To achieve Charter status, the County Council must have in place a clear councillor development strategy which is embedded into practice and regularly reviewed evidencing that political and managerial leadership is committed to the development of members. The proposed Member Development Strategy brings together aspects of member development and provide a clear commitment to members to provide the support they need to carry out their roles effectively.

Recommendation

That the Member Development Strategy, as set out at Appendix A, be approved.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The Member Development Group (MDG) is the custodian of all aspects of the member role and has responsibility for managing all aspects of the member development process. It is a sub-group of the Governance Committee.
- 1.2 This report presents the draft Member Development Strategy for consideration, following agreement by MDG that the Council should undertake South East Employers' 'Charter for Elected Member Development', as supported by the Governance Committee at its meeting in September 2019.

2. Member Development Strategy

- 2.1 Involvement in the Charter will provide a robust framework for continued professional member development. The benefits of Charter status are:
 - Stronger focus on learning and development and the member role.
 - A strategic and structured approach to member development.
 - Development has a clear, strong relevance to current challenges and opportunities and the achievement of strategic objectives.

- A robust analytical, evidence-based approach to members' needs.
 - Members are given the skills, knowledge and confidence to lead, serve and contribute more effectively.
 - The integration of new members into the Council is accelerated.
 - Succession planning, diversity and cultural behaviours are embedded.
 - Learning and development is effective in building councillor capacity.
- 2.2 To achieve Charter status, the County Council must have in place a clear member development strategy which is embedded into practice and regularly reviewed, and it must show that political and managerial leadership is committed to the development of members. The proposed Member Development Strategy, as set out in Appendix A, brings together aspects of member development and provide a clear commitment to members to provide the support they need to carry out their roles effectively.
- 2.3 The Charter requires that the Member Development Strategy must evidence certain actions, which are that it:
- Is developed and monitored by a cross-party member development group (which for the Council is the MDG);
 - Identifies priority development needs and makes stated and clear links with the Council's corporate, strategic objectives;
 - Includes an induction process and ensures that is evaluated after each election;
 - Has a structured process for assessing members' individual learning and development needs based on focused objectives;
 - Provides equal access to learning and development for all members;
 - Provides a designated budget for member development;
 - Puts in place evaluation processes which look at the cost and benefits of member development; and
 - Puts in place a cross-party, member-led review process for the strategy.
- 2.4 In addition to the requirements of the Charter, the Strategy encompasses some of the wider provision for members, including:
- How the Council will support members to achieve a balance between their role and personal life, including provisions that help members to engage in development opportunities;
 - The provision of technology that supports members in their role; and
 - The ways in which the Council engages members opinions on learning and development matters.
- 2.5 MDG considered the draft Strategy at its meeting in February 2020 and recommendations from the group have been incorporated in the version which will is now presented to the Governance Committee.
- 2.6 MDG recommends that the Governance Committee considers and approves the Member Development Strategy.

Factors taken into account

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The whole membership has been consulted on a number of occasions about

various elements of member development which are now drawn together within this strategy. Following consultation with members, recommendations have been made and acted on, where practicable, and the resultant outcomes are incorporated into the strategy document.

- 3.2 The strategy has been written by MDG. As a member-led, cross-party group this allows representation on member learning and development matters from across the political spectrum.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council is currently in the process of developing a suite of member policies including caring and parental leave, absence, lone working, anti-harassment and social media. Some of these policies help to provide the basis of an environment which encourages and supports member development, but they do not, as stand-alone documents or as a suite of policies, provide for all aspects of member learning and development. These policies alone would not be sufficient to show the Council's commitment to and the process of member development within the authority.

5. Equality Duty

- 5.1 The strategy gives a commitment to provide fair opportunities for learning and development to all members.

6. Social Value

- 6.1 Well trained councillors are able to carry out their roles more effectively, thus supporting the Council to better achieve its aims and objectives and provide excellent services for local people.

7. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. Human Rights Implications

- 8.1 Not applicable.

Tony Kershaw

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Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Member Development Strategy

Background Papers

None

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West Sussex County Council

Member Development Strategy

Introduction

West Sussex County Council understands the importance of ensuring that elected members are effectively supported to lead the Council to achieve the vision and objectives laid out in the West Sussex Plan to deliver high quality services that improve the lives of residents.

The Council is committed to providing members with the right learning and development opportunities that will enable them to fulfil their strategic and local roles and carry out their roles effectively and confidently. It is also committed to provide fair and equitable learning opportunities for all members.

This Member Development Strategy provides the structure for councillor learning and development. It underpins and sets out the support provided to them to ensure their training reflects both their personal needs and organisational requirements.

This Strategy recognises the relationship between local communities, the Council and the government and the significance of the role that elected representatives play in:

- being effective leaders and decision makers;
- scrutiny, governance and non-executive functions;
- the Council's commitment to its residents and understanding of local and community issues;
- how regional and national issues and government policy affecting West Sussex might be influenced;
- matters such as sustainability and the environment;
- the work of successful partnerships, and
- ensuring the Council provides value for money.

Member Development Group

West Sussex County Council has a well-established member-led, cross-party Member Development Group (MDG), which is a sub-group of the Governance Committee. MDG is the custodian of all aspects of the member role and has responsibility for managing the member development process.

This includes the programme of planned all-member sessions that runs over the municipal year, ad-hoc development events and projects and an induction programme following elections every four years or following by-elections.

MDG is also responsible for wider development activities including overseeing the member development budget, the Charter for Elected Member Development, feedback on various aspects of the member role, role profiles and promotion the member role, specific policies relating to support provided to members and member health, wellbeing and safety.

Member Induction Programme

The Council offers a structured induction programme which follows the local elections every four years. This Member Induction Programme is developed and overseen by MDG. There are four main elements to the programme:

1. **Pre-election period** (prior to the date of the local elections) – information and support made available to people considering standing for election and to candidates. Personal welcome and information is provided at the count to those who are elected.
2. **Core Induction** (from day after the election and up 3 months after) – key information is provided including resources and training for new and returning members. Each member will have a buddy from within Democratic Services to help with induction and signposting to any further advice or support needed.
3. **Specific member role training** (ongoing from after the election) – members will be supported and provided with training in their specific roles, e.g. cabinet, committees, outside bodies, County Local Committees (CLCs).
4. **Visits** – visits to key strategic services will be offered to all members; other opportunities to visit services will be considered on a locality basis, as well according to specific needs, e.g. visits may be arranged for certain committees.

A review of the Induction Programme will be undertaken. MDG will seek the views of members regarding the topics and content of induction sessions and information provided in order to ensure that the future programme best fits the needs of both newly elected and returning members.

Members who are elected at by-elections will be supported with an individual induction package.

Annual Member Development Programme

Following the initial three-month Induction Programme, the Council's Member Development Programme will pick-up and run until end of the municipal year. In non-election years the Council will schedule in 12 'member day' dates per year (up to 24 member development sessions). Additional member days may sometimes be offered as need arises.

The content of the member day sessions can broadly categorised as follows:

- Corporate priorities, including those within the West Sussex Plan
- Service improvement
- Policy and strategy development
- Major contract renewal
- Engagement in the budget process and understanding of local government finance
- Members' knowledge base - understanding the Council's services through updates, briefings and engagement
- Key and personal skills (e.g. chairmanship, questioning, council procedures, safeguarding)
- Values and culture (e.g. Code of Conduct, unconscious bias)

Periodically, some of the events on offer will be facilitated by experts from external organisations, e.g. chairmanship skills, corporate parenting training.

Topics and prioritisation for member development events is approved by MDG.

Member development events are formally announced to members around four to six weeks ahead of each event. Information about the Member Development Programme will be made available on the Member Day page on the Mine (online Members' Information Network – for further details, see 'Resources' below), this will include the topic, timings and any papers and presentations for each event.

Other Training

External Training and Conferences

Where appropriate and approved by the relevant Group Leader, members can access opportunities for learning outside the Council which includes attending conferences and external training courses. There is a dedicated budget for member training, which includes the costs for such external events/courses. This is overseen by MDG.

Online Learning

Members are able to access a range of online learning courses through the Council's own learning and development website and also via the Local Government Association (LGA). Online learning complements face-to-face learning and provides additional opportunities that are not available in the annual member development programme, for example, technical modules for IT skills or various courses on cultural values and personal development.

Role-Specific Training

Members are supported with training that meets the specific needs of their role, where required, for example:

- Cabinet Members will be provided with training that is appropriate to the position, e.g. advanced media training, decision making process.
- Chairmen and Vice-chairman of County Council Committees will be offered priority places on chairmanship skills workshops.
- Members of quasi-judicial committees such as Planning Committee, Rights of Way Committee and Staff Appeals Panel will receive training in legislation and policies pertinent to the role.
- Appropriate training will be provided for all roles on various committees and panels, for example scrutiny, questioning skills.

Local Role

All councillors are members of a County Local Committee (CLC), which are designed to ensure that local people can help shape the services provided by the County Council and involve local residents in decision making. Each CLC makes a commitment to providing members with the opportunity shape the way it works and understand the issues that are specific to the locality.

Training on the local community role of members is provided as part of the Induction Programme. CLCs host an area-based member day at least once per electoral term which provides local members with information about their division, e.g. data on public health, and a chance to meet local officers, e.g. the Area Highways Manager.

Visits

From time to time, members will be offered the chance to visit services provided by the Council or by partner organisations. Such visits can enhance members' understanding of how Council services are provided and the specific needs and challenges or successes of an individual service.

Leadership Development

Leadership development is supported via leadership development programmes for example the LGA's Leadership Academy. This applies to the Executive and to leaders of opposition groups. Coaching and mentoring support is also available.

Personal Development Records

A record of each member's personal development for the electoral period will be available, enabling members to keep a track of the learning they have undertaken including role-specific training, online learning, and events attended. Members will also be supported by Democratic Services on a regular basis to identify their individual training needs and gaps in learning and ways to fill these.

Learning and Data Resources

The Council offers numerous sources of information and data. Some is provided only to members because it relates specifically to their role as a councillor. Other information may be more generally available but is helpful to members in carrying out the role on a day-to-day basis and also helps to enhance members' knowledge of Council services and provision.

The Mine

Members are provided with access to the Mine (Members' Information Network) which is a dedicated intranet site for members containing a wide range of essential and useful information – including induction materials - in the form of documents or weblinks, about all aspects of the member role and how the Council functions. The Mine includes a dedicated Member Days page (see 'Annual Member Development Programme' above).

Members' Essential Information Pack

Upon election, both new and returning members will be provided with access to an online pack of essential information, allowing members to easily identify the information that is relevant their questions at the time. The layout of information is arranged as follows, and reflects information found on the Mine:

- **About You** – e.g. member allowances; support available, Code of Conduct and members interests, IT, details of Council buildings, etc.
- **About West Sussex County Council** – corporate plan, senior management structure, key contacts, overview of how the Council works, etc.
- **Strategic Role** – key committees and panels, overview of strategic roles.
- **Your local role** – County Local Committees, key local contacts, ways of working, etc.

Mapping Tools

The Council uses a number of mapping tools. The following are examples of mapping tools which members find particularly helpful to them in their local role:

LocalView Fusion - Current and historic data including community information, education, social care and health, council (councillors and wards), Ordnance Survey information and postcodes, environment, planning, roads and transport including Traffic Regulation Orders, public rights of way, and more.

Roadworks Map - Up-to-date information about roadworks being carried out across West Sussex.

West Sussex Life

[West Sussex Life](#) is a very helpful, publicly available, source of information and statistics about numerous aspects of life in West Sussex, including population, economy, housing, health and wellbeing and the environment and sustainability.

Role of Democratic Services

Democratic Services officers facilitate the provision of learning and development opportunities for members, as follows:

- Liaison with Council services and external trainers to ensure the content and delivery of in-house training events and briefings meets their objectives and the needs of members and the organisation
- Provision of logistical arrangements for all in-house events.
- Searches for and suggestions of external events or conferences that may enhance a member's role or understanding, and the booking of such events.
- Promotion of appropriate on-line learning.
- Management of all feedback, surveys and subsequent reports, and the implementation of relevant outcomes.
- Support to MDG.

Democratic Services Buddy

New members will be allocated a buddy from Democratic Services. Buddies will provide help with IT and, in the first few weeks, are a point of contact for general queries whilst new members find their feet.

Members' IT

The Council understands that effective IT is vital to members in enabling them to carry out their role, especially when working remotely. The IT resources offered by the Council benefits members in terms of learning and development by enabling them to access information easily and engage with and keep up-to-date with the work of the Council.

IT Kit and Software

The County Council will provide each member with a touch-screen laptop which, as well as enabling them to carry out the day to day role, provides the necessary access to the Mine and enables access to the relevant documents and weblinks – including on-line evaluation tools – that are used in training.

Members IT uses 'Skype for Business' which is part of the software on the laptop. As well as a telephone system it includes an internal instant messaging service – to anyone on the West Sussex County Council network – and Skype face-to-face calls.

The Council uses Mod.Gov, a content management system for committee papers and recording and reporting of decisions. During 2020, the Council intends to implement an app for Mod.Gov which will be available to members, allowing paperless access to agendas, reports and decision documents.

IT Training

The County Council will offer members training sessions in IT basics and IT security and will offer further training if required.

A dedicated IT helpline is available for members.

Video-conferencing

The County Council has a video-conferencing facility with a suite of two linked meeting rooms, one at County Hall in Chichester and the other at County Hall North in Horsham. This facility is available for informal member-led meetings. Video-conferencing can also link to Skype allowing members at multiple locations to attend a meeting. This convenient facility can help members to maximise their time and reduce their travel.

Webcasts of Meetings

Many of the Council's formal meetings held are webcast, meaning that they are available to view live on-line – and via an archive for period of time after each meeting. Meetings which are webcast include County Council meetings (full Council meetings), scrutiny committees and Planning Committee. This can be a useful source of information for all members.

Support

The Council provides some facilities that may enable members to find it easier to balance their role and personal life; where applicable this support may help members to more easily and better access the learning opportunities on offer,

for example, allowances can be claimed for care of dependants to allow a member to attend training sessions.

Employee Assistance Programme

Members are able to access the Employee Assistance Programme, a free, confidential service delivered by Health Assured, an independent external organisation, which can help deal with any personal or professional problems effecting home life or work life, health and general wellbeing; this includes access to a counselling service.

Member Policies

The Council will provide a suite of policies reflecting the specific role that members carry out, these include absence and caring and parental leave; the latter being particularly useful in relation to supporting members with dependants to be able to attend meetings and training events.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Council will make reasonable adjustments to help the needs of members who may need additional support or aids to carry out their role.

Member Training Budget

The Council has a dedicated budget for member learning and development which covers the costs associated with providing in-house learning (including in-house courses run by external trainers) and attendance at external events and conferences.

The budget is managed on a day-to-day basis by Democratic Services.

MDG reviews the member training budget on an annual basis, and will make recommendations where appropriate.

Member Engagement to Improve Learning and Development

The Council regularly engages the wider-membership in improving learning and development opportunities and understanding members' needs. The ways in which this is done include:

Member Feedback

Members are encouraged to give feedback on the content, delivery and usefulness of each member day event, with the aim of ensuring that services provide member development sessions that best support members' needs and their understanding of the Council's work. An on-line evaluation tool is used and members will be provided with links to complete evaluations following each member development event.

Results of feedback from member development events are assessed by MDG and any recommendations reported to Governance Committee. And, where

applicable, any outcomes will be advised to the wider membership.

Member Surveys

From time to time the Council will seek members' opinions on matters that affect them and the role, for example, the timing and content of member development events, the member remuneration package or changes to how committees work. This is carried out using an access-restricted survey using the Council's 'Have Your Say' consultation service.

The Council seeks the views of members about the content and usefulness of the Council's induction programme, via the means of a survey.

Following any member survey, results will be considered by MDG and recommendations and changes reported to Governance Committee and thence to the wider membership.

Review of Member Learning Development

MDG provides regular update reports to Governance Committee. This includes proposals for member development/training topics and an overview of upcoming events, key feedback from members and plans for and progress of ad-hoc training and projects. In this way Governance Committee monitors and is able to influence the member development programme.

In order to assess both the costs and benefits of member learning and development, MDG annually evaluates the success of the overall member development programme for each municipal year including external training and ad-hoc projects, as well as reviewing the provision and allocation of the member development budget. Recommendations will be made and considered by Governance Committee to be incorporated into future planning.

Review of Member Development Strategy

MDG will review this Member Development Strategy at least once every electoral term, to ensure that it is current and fit for purpose. Recommendations following each review will be considered by Governance Committee to ensure robust scrutiny.

Chartered for Elected Member Development

In 2019, the Council made a commitment to undertaking the South-East Employers' Charter for Elected Member Development. The Charter provides a robust, structured framework designed to help the authority enhance member development, with three essential criteria:

- There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support.
- The council has a strategic approach to councillor development.
- Learning and development is effective in building councillor capacity.

The Council will aim to demonstrate its commitment in these areas as it works through the stages towards accreditation.