

Governance Committee

9 May 2022 – At a meeting of the Governance Committee held at 2.15 pm at County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RQ.

Present: Cllr Bradbury (Chairman)

Cllr Wickremaratchi, Cllr Baxter, Cllr Burrett, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr Lord, Cllr Marshall and Cllr O'Kelly

Apologies were received from Cllr Waight

Part I

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 No interests declared.

2. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

2.1 Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2022 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Development of an Executive-Scrutiny Protocol

3.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance on the development of an Executive-Scrutiny Protocol, in line with the statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local authorities (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by the Head of Democratic Services.

3.2 The Committee welcomed the proposal to develop the Protocol. Members noted that the national guidance would be helpful to build on the Council's good practice and emphasised the benefits of early work on policy development and engagement of scrutiny members by the Cabinet. Members considered that a positive culture around scrutiny is important to maintain and felt that national guidance references to member behaviour, while useful, were unlikely to be necessary for the County Council.

3.3 Resolved –

- (1) That an Executive-Scrutiny Protocol be developed and the process for member engagement be pursued.
- (2) That a draft Protocol be presented for approval by the Committee in September 2022.

4. Member Meetings Update

4.1 The Committee considered an update by the Director of Law and Assurance on member meetings (copy appended to the signed minutes).

This update confirmed the arrangements in place, which reflect what the Committee agreed at its last meeting as well as the more recent easing of Public Health precautions.

4.2 The report was introduced by the Head of Democratic Services, who highlighted the request by the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board to introduce webcasting of Board meetings as its agendas cover matters of significant public interest and public-facing council and NHS services.

4.3 The Committee agreed to trial the webcasting of Health and Wellbeing Board meetings. A request was made to review the decision not to webcast meetings of the Governance Committee as the viewing figures reported in the appendix to the report were comparable to that of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

4.4 Members also discussed virtual and hybrid meeting arrangements. It was recognised that there are some advantages to their use but there was agreement that members should attend the meetings of the full County Council in person to help informal networking and ensure full involvement in the business of the Council. The differentiation in recording member meeting attendance was also discussed and members considered it best to distinguish between virtual and face to face attendance in meeting minutes.

4.5 Members commented on the value of networking opportunities for members on Council Day if they are in person. The Chairman agreed and advised that he would ask for some ideas to assist this to be explored, including member catering.

4.6 Resolved –

- (1) That arrangements for member meetings as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (2) That the webcasting viewing figures set out in Appendix 2 to the report be noted; and
- (3) That Health and Wellbeing Board meetings be webcast for a one-year trial period.
- (4) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to enable the review of virtual participation in meetings and the position on webcasting meetings of the Governance Committee.

5. Report of the Member Development Group

5.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Member Development Group on the work of the Group, member development activities and member training and development priorities and plans (copy appended to the signed minutes).

5.2 The report was introduced by the Vice-Chairman in his capacity as Chairman of the Group. He advised that a recent re-assessment of the Council's Charter for Member Development by South East Employers had gone well and that the Council should consider applying for the 'Charter Plus'. He also highlighted that the remaining eight members who had not yet undertaken the mandatory IT security training had been asked to prioritise its completion as a matter of urgency, which would be followed up.

5.3 The Committee welcomed the report and agreed that meaningful evaluation feedback after member development sessions was important. It was noted that the Group would soon discuss various options for this.

5.4 Resolved – That the report be noted.

6. Appointments to Committees, Panels and Outside Bodies

6.1 In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Committee was asked to appoint members to serve on the committees, panels and outside bodies as set out in the report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes) in line with the expressed wishes of the political groups.

6.2 Resolved – That appointments to committees, panels and South East Employers be approved as set out in the report.

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1 The Committee noted that the next meeting will be held at 2.15 p.m. on Monday, 6 June 2022.

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

Chairman