

## MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

21 June 2023 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor C. Davidson (Chair)

Councillors H. Clark, D. Eley, J. Potter, J. Sosin and M. Steel

Also in attendance –

Parish Councillor P Jackson

Independent Persons –

Mr P Jeremiah

Mr D Lamb

Mrs P Mills

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rajesh and the Independent Person Mrs Gosling.

### 2. Election of Vice Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor D. Eley be elected as Vice Chair of the Committee for 2023/24.

### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 4. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary interests or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

## 5. Public Question Time

No questions were asked or statements made by members of the public.

## 6. Chair's Announcements

No announcements were made.

## 7. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

The Committee considered recommendations from the Constitution Working Group in relation to proposed changes to the City Council's Constitution. The Committee were informed that the Constitution was reviewed at least annually, to ensure it remained completed, upto date and reflected current practice and legislation. The Committee were reminded of the existing process, where recommendations went from the Working Group, to the Governance Committee, the Cabinet (where appropriate) and then onto Full Council.

It was noted that two further proposed changes since March 2023 had been initiated by officers and had been agreed by the Working Group on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June. The Committee heard that the two changes related to a new delegation in relation to neighbourhood planning referenda and modifications in relation to fees and charges and were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report. The Committee heard that the changes would prevent delays in the neighbourhood planning process and the amended financial rules reflected a clarified approach to setting fees and charges, in line with other financial rules.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers confirmed that;

- The limits referred to were not reviewed often and that explained why in this case of realigning them, there was a significant change in the figure.
- The limits were in effect being lined up with those already available to the Cabinet, for clarity and it was also noted that larger financial decisions would continue to be taken by the Cabinet or Council.
- The figures were in line with those at other local authorities.

**RESOLVED** that the proposed amendments to the Constitution

(7.10pm to 7.23pm)

## 8. Annual Report of the Governance Committee

The Committee received for its approval its Annual Report for 2022-23 before its submission to Council. Officers noted that some acronyms should be removed before it is seen by Council to ensure it is clear to read for everyone.

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Report of the Governance Committee for 2022-23 be approved and submitted to the Council.

(7.24pm to 7.26pm)

## 9. Work Programme

The Committee received its work programme for 2023-24.

**RESOLVED** that the work programme of the Committee be noted.

(7.27pm to 7.28pm)

## Exclusion of the Public

Resolved that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for Items 11 and 12 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

## 10. Parish and Town Council Representatives on the Committee

The Committee received a report on the need to appoint two Parish Councillor representatives to the Committee. Nominations had been sought from Parish Tier Councils. Five expressions of interests were received which were then considered by the Committee. The Committee considered the five nominations and discussed the merits of each one.

The Committee agreed that the past experience of Cllr Bentley, as a previous City Councillor on the Committee, would be very beneficial and provide some continuity. The Committee also felt that Cllr Golla would be a sensible appointment, as they are a new Councillor and would bring a different perspective to Cllr Bentley, especially as they are from the new Chelmsford Garden Community Council.

**RESOLVED** that;

1. The Committee appointed Councillors Bentley and Golla as Parish Tier Councillor representatives.

(7.29pm to 7.53pm)

## 11. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.53pm

Chair